

SERMONS AND DISCOURSES

UPON THE
Most Important and Interesting Subjects.

By the late REVEREND
MR. EBENEZER ERSKINE.
Minister of the Gospel at STIRLING. *κ*

I. GOD'S LITTLE REMNANT
KEEPING THEIR GAR-
MENTS CLEAN IN AN
EVIL DAY.

II. THE BACKSLIDER CHA-
RACTERISED.

III. THE WIND OF THE HOLY
GHOST BLOWING UPON
THE DRY BONES IN THE
VALLEY OF VISION.

IV. THE KING IN THE GAL-
LERIES.

V. THE GROANS OF BELIEV-
ERS UNDER THEIR BUR-
DENS.

VI. THE BELIEVER EXALT-
ED IN IMPUTED RIGH-
TEOUSNESS.

VII. THE HUMBLE SOUL
THE PECULIAR FA-
VOURITE OF HEAVEN.

VIII. CHRIST IN THE RE-
LIEVER'S ARMS.

IX. A DISCOURSE ON THE
THRONE OF GRACE.

X. THE ASSURANCE OF
FAITH OPENED AND
APPLIED.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME FIRST.

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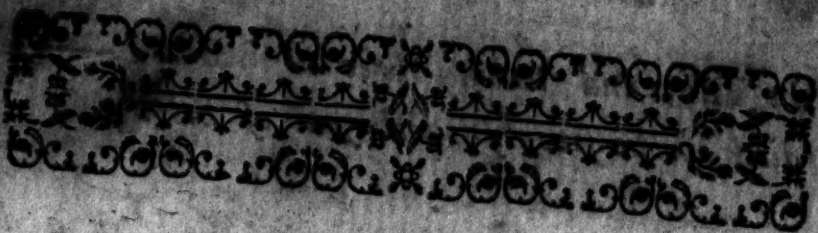
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P R E F A C E.

*I*T would be great presumption to attempt any recommendation of the following discourses, when they have had, hitherto, their approbation, in the judgment and experience of so many serious and well-disposed Christians, both at home and abroad: nor will any such thing be expected from one, to whom the worthy author stood so nearly related, as I do.

His praise is already in the churches; and though he be dead, he yet speaketh. His modesty did not permit him to leave any memoirs of his life, for public use.——He was twenty-eight years minister at Portmoak in

iv P R E F A C E.

in Fife, and twenty-three at Stirling.—He died in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

It is hoped, that whoever shall, in a dependance upon the divine blessing, peruse the valuable treasure, contained in these volumes, shall find many things, (as the renowned Mr. Hervey expresses it), "to the edification of" their "hearts, in true faith, solid comfort, "and evangelical holiness."—That this may be the case with multitudes, is the sincere desire of

Glasgow, February 10.

1761.

JAMES FISHER.

THE

T H E C O N T E N T S.

I. **G**OD's little remnant keeping their garments clean in an evil day.

REV. iii. 4.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

II. The backslider characterised.

JOHN vi. 66.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

III. The wind of the Holy Ghost blowing upon the dry bones in the valley of vision.

EZEK. xxxvii. 9.

Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon the slain, that they may live.

IV. The King held in the galleries.

CANT. vii. 5.

The King is held in the galleries,

V. The groans of believers under their burdens.

2 COR. v. 4.

We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.

VI. The

VI. The believer exalted in imputed righteousness.

PSAL. lxxxix. 16.

In thy name shall they rejoice all the day long: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

VII. The humble soul the peculiar favourite of Heaven.

PSAL. cxxxviii. 6.

Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.

VIII. Christ in the believer's arms.

LUKE ii. 28.

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God.

IX. A discourse on the throne of grace.

PSAL. lxxxix. 14.

Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.

X. The assurance of faith opened and applied.

HEB. x. 22.

Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.

SERMONS.



S E R M O N S.

GOD's little remnant keeping their Garments clean in an evil Day.

Preached on a sacramental Occasion at STRATHMIGLO, Monday, June 3, 1714.

R E V. iii. 4.

Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

THE first six verses of this chapter contain an epistle sent by Jesus Christ unto the church of Sardis. Where we have, first, the preface, and then the body of the epistle. In the body of the epistle we may notice these three things. 1. An accusation or charge, in the close of the 1st verse. 2.

VOL. I.

A

An

An exhortation unto several duties, such as repentance, watchfulness, and the like, vers. 2. 3. 3. We have a commendation given to this church, in the words of my text, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis,' &c. Where, more particularly, we have, 1st, The commendation itself, 'Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments.' 2^{dly}, A reward, 'They shall walk with me in white.' 3^{dly}, The reason and ground of this, 'For they are worthy.' *First*, I say, we have the commendation itself. Where we may notice, the commender, the commended, and the ground on which the commendation runs. 1. The commender. Who he is may be gathered from the connection. It is 'he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars,' vers. 1. It is Christ himself. And his commendation may be depended upon; for he trieth the heart and reins, and needs not that any should testify of man unto him, because he knows what is in man. 2. The party commended. Who are described, (1.) From their designation; they are called *names*. God had 'given them a new name, 'a name better than of sons and of daughters,' even a name *among the living in Jerusalem*: they were marked among the rolls of his chosen, redeemed, and sanctified ones. By their zeal, uprightness, integrity, and their honest appearance for God, in that degenerate day and place, they had distinguished themselves from others, and so purchased a name to themselves: and they were known to men, as well as unto God: 'The Lord knoweth the righteous;' and he knows them by name, they are marked out among others. (2.) They are described by their paucity; they are a *few names*. They were comparatively few, when

when laid in the balance with the multitude and bulk of carnal secure professors in this church : there was but a small part of them that had kept themselves free of the corruptions and defections of that church, and that had not bowed the knee unto Baal. (3.) They are described from the place of their residence, *Sardis*, one of the seven churches of the Lesser Asia. The expression here is observable, *A few names even in Sardis*. Christ's character of this church in the close of the first verse, was, that they were generally dead, though they had a name to live : 'But,' as if he had said, 'though the generality of this church be dead, yet even there I have a few lively and tender Christians.' But then, 3. Notice the ground on which the commendation runs ; they have kept their garments clean, or *have not defiled their garments*. Perhaps there may be an allusion in this expression unto the Jews, who were not to come near any thing that was unclean, by the law of Moses, or to touch them with their garments, lest they should be defiled : or it may allude unto the practice of the eastern countries, who used to gird up their long garments, to keep them from being defiled, or spotted. The meaning is, that this little remnant in Sardis had maintained their integrity, like Job : they were 'perfect and upright' men, men 'that feared God, and eschewed evil ;' they had not complied with the abounding errors and corruptions of their day, but 'exercised themselves to keep consciences void of offence towards God and man.' When others were sleeping, they were waking, about their work ; when others in that church were dead and secure, they were lively. And so much for the commendation given by

Christ unto this remnant. *Secondly*, In the words we have a reward, or rather we may call it a consolatory promise made unto this little remnant, 'They shall walk with me in white.' that is, 'they shall be admitted to the immediate enjoyment of fellowship and communion with me, and be partakers of my glory in heaven through eternity.' But the import of the expression may be more fully spoken to afterward. *Thirdly*, In the words we have the reason and ground why the Lord puts such a difference between his remnant and others, 'For they are worthy;' that is, valuable and excellent persons, as Solomon speaks, 'The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.' Not as if they had any worthiness or excellency in themselves beyond others by nature: no, no; 'They are children of wrath and condemnation, even as others:' but they are made worthy by justifying and sanctifying grace, by imputed righteousness and inherent holiness. Some render the word, 'For they are meet:' so the word is rendered, Matth. iii. 8, 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.' So here the Lord promises, that they who keep their garments clean 'should walk with him in white;' why, because it is meet or suitable it should be so, that they who are holy here, should be happy hereafter.

Doct. 'That although there be but few in a visible church that keep their garments clean in a declining time, yet these few are highly valued by Christ, and shall be admitted to partake of his glory in heaven.'

This

This doctrine I take to be the scope of the verse, 'Thou hast a few names, &c.' In discoursing this point, I shall endeavour, through divine assistance, to do these six things. I. Offer a few propositions concerning this little remnant. II. Shew that Christ has a high value for this remnant; they are worthy in his esteem. III. What is imported in their keeping their garments clean. IV. What it is to walk with Christ in white. V. Inquire into the connection between the duty and privilege. VI. Apply the whole.

I. The *first* thing is, to 'offer a few propositions concerning this remnant,' who are said to 'keep their garments clean;' and ye may take these few following.

1. That God the Father gave a remnant unto Christ of the posterity of Adam, in the covenant of redemption, to be ransomed and redeemed by him, from that wo and wrath, into which Adam by his apostasy had involved himself and all his posterity. That such a remnant was gifted unto Christ by the Father, is plain from John xvii. where Christ in his prayer frequently speaks of those that the Father gave him, particularly vers. 6. 'Thing they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.' He promised to him, for his encouragement in that great undertaking, that he should have 'a seed to serve him, and see of the travel of his soul.'

2. The Lord Jesus, the eternal Son of God, in the fulness of time, took on the nature of man, and in our nature obeyed the law, and died in the room and stead of this remnant which the Father gave him. He did

6 S E R M O N S.

not obey the law, and satisfy justice, for the whole world, or for all men, as Arminians talk: no; but he died for a select number. Hence he is said to 'lay down his life for his sheep,' and not for the goats. And as his death, so his intercession is confined unto this remnant, as is plain from John xvii. 9. 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine.'

3. This redeemed remnant are, in God's own time, sooner or later, under the ministry of gospel-ordinances determined, by the power and efficacy of divine grace, to close with Christ, upon the call of the gospel, and to go in to the blessed contrivance of salvation and redemption through him: he *translates* them, in a 'day of his power, out of darkness into his marvelous light, and into the kingdom of his dear Son.' Not one of this elected remnant, but shall in due time be brought home; for 'whom he did predestinate, them he also called.'

4. God's little remnant are a holy people. They are a set of men that study to keep clean garments; they study to "purify themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord;" and therefore called *the people of his holiness*, Is. lxiii. 18. Holiness is the design of their election; for 'he hath predestinate us unto the adoption of children, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' Holiness is the design of their redemption by Christ Jesus: Tit. ii. 14. 'He hath redeemed us from all iniquity, and purified unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Holiness is the design of their effectual calling;

calling; 'for God hath not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness; and he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.' So that, I say, God's remnant, they are a holy remnant.

5. The number of this is but small; there are but a few names in Sardis, that have not defiled their garments.' Christ's flock is but a *little flock*. It is indeed a great flock, and an innumerable multitude, abstractly considered; but considered comparatively, or when laid in the balance with the droves and multitudes of the wicked, it is but a little flock, and a small remnant. They are few that are elected; 'for many are called, but few are chosen:' they are few that are redeemed; it is only God's elect that are *bought with a price*: they are few that are effectually called; for 'to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' few that hold out in the time of temptation; but *seven thousand* among all the thousands of Israel 'that have not bowed the knee to Baal.'

6. Although they be but few, yet in the worst of times God has always some of this remnant, who cleave to him and his way, even when all about them are corrupting their ways. He had a Lot in Sodom, whose righteous soul was vexed with the abominations of the place; he has a remnant of mourners in Jerusalem, when the whole city was defiled with wickedness; he has his *two witnesses* to bear testimony unto his truths, when *the whole world is wandering after the beast*, and over-run with Antichristian darkness and idolatry.

7. Lastly, God has a special eye of favour and kindness on this remnant, in a sinful and declining time. He has 'a mark set upon the men that sigh

and cry for the abominations in Jerusalem; his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him,' &c. But this leads me to,

II. The *second* thing proposed, which was to shew, *that Christ has a high value for this remnant.* They are the worthies of the world in his esteem, however they be disesteemed and undervalued by the world. This will appear from these following considerations.

1. Consider what an account he makes of them, when compared with the rest of the world. He values them so highly, that he will give whole nations and kingdoms of the wicked for their ransom: Is. xliii. 4. 'Ever since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; and I gave men for thee,' &c.; that is, he will sacrifice whole nations and kingdoms of wicked men, before he be bereft of his little remnant. The scriptures are very full to this purpose. His remnant is the gold, the rest of the world are but dross: 'Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross,' Psal. cxix. 119.: but 'the precious sons of Zion are comparable to fine gold,' Lam. iv. 2.; not only gold, but fine gold, polished by the hand of the Spirit. Again, his little remnant are the wheat, but the rest of the world are the chaff; and 'what is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?' When he comes with his fan in his hand, he will gather his wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn up with fire that is unquenchable,' Matth. iii. 12. His little remnant is the good corn, but the wicked

wicked are the tares; and he will say to his reapers at the last judgment, 'Gather the tares together, and bind them in bundles to burn them;' but 'gather the good corn into my barn.' His remnant are his sheep, but the rest are the goats; and he will say to the sheep on his right hand, *Come, ye blessed;* but to the goats he will say, *Depart, ye cursed.* His remnant are his vessels of honour, whom he sets by as plenishing to garnish 'the house not made with hands;' but the wicked are vessels of wrath, whom he 'will break in pieces as a potter's vessel,' and cast into the furnace of his anger. Thus, I say, that they are worthy in his esteem, is evident from the account he makes of them when laid in the balance with others.

2. That this little remnant are worthy in Christ's account, will appear, if we consider the names and appellations that he gives them. He sometimes calls them his *love*, his *dove*, his *undefiled*, his *Hephzibah*, his *Beulah*, his *Jedidiahs*, the very darlings of his heart. He calls them sometimes his *jewels*: Mal. iii. 17. 'They shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels, and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.' He calls them the very *apple of his eye*, the most tender part of the body; and the eye-lid of his special providence doth cover them. Yea, such is the value that he has for them, that he calls them *himself*, and speaks of them as if he and they were but one. 'Saul, Saul,' says the Lord, 'why persecutest thou me?'

3. Consider the endeared relation they stand under unto him; and from thence you will see, that

they cannot but be worthy in his esteem. There is a legal, a moral, and a mystical union between him and them. He is their head, and they are his members; he is the root, and they are the branches that grow upon him; he is the husband, and they are his spouse and bride, 'Thy Maker is thy husband;' he is their Father, and they are his children: he is their elder brother, and they are his younger brethren; he is heir of all things, and he makes them joint-heirs with himself of his heavenly kingdom; he is their advocate, and they are his clients; he is their king, and they are his subjects.

4. They cannot but be worthy in his esteem, if ye consider how much he values, not only their persons, but whatever pertains unto them. He values their names; 'I have a few names in Sardis;' he keeps them among the records of heaven, and has them 'written in the Lamb's book of life.' He values their prayers: Cant. ii. 14. 'O my dove that art in the clefts of the rock, let me hear thy voice, for it is sweet.' The prayers of the wicked are like the howling of dogs to him; but the prayers of the upright remnant are his delight. He values their tears, and 'puts them into his bottle;' he, as it were, gathers every drop from their eyes: 'I have heard thy prayers, I have seen thy tears,' saith the Lord to Hezekiah. He values their blood: Psal. cxvi. 15. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints:' and they that shed their blood, he will give them blood to drink.

5. Lastly, That they are worthy in his esteem, appears from what he does for them. He remembered them in their low estate, and set his love on them
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when they were wallowing in their blood. He has loved them with an everlasting love, an unalterable love, with an ardent love; his love to them 'is strong 'as death:' he 'has redeemed them with his 'blood; for we are not redeemed by corruptible 'things, such as silver and gold,' &c. 'He hath 'loved us, and washed us with his own blood,' Rev. i. 5. He confers many excellent privileges upon them. They have an excellent pardon, it being full, final, and irrevocable, Heb. viii. 12. They have an excellent peace, 'which passes all understanding; an excellent joy, being 'unspeakable, and full of glory; excellent food, they 'eat of the hidden manna; have access to an excellent throne 'with boldness,' Heb. iv. 16. They have excellent communion, even 'fellowship with the Father, and with 'his Son Jesus Christ.' They have the interposition of an excellent Mediator, even Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. They have an excellent guard attending them; they are guarded with the divine attributes, even 'as the mountains are about Jerusalem; guarded with the 'twenty thousand chariots of angels,' Mahanaim, 'the two hosts of God.' They have an excellent store-house, even the 'whole fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Christ.' They are clothed with excellent robes, even 'the garments of salvation, and robes of righteousness.' They are 'heirs of an everlasting inheritance, that is 'incorruptible and undefiled; yea, 'heirs with God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.' And, to crown all, they have excellent security for all this, the word of God, his covenant, his oath, his blood, and the earnest of his Spirit. From all which it ap-

pears, what an high value he has for them, and how worthy they are in his count and reckoning.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, to *inquire into what is imported in the remnant their keeping their garments clean.* And,

1. It imports, that God's remnant are clothed, or, that they have garments given them: they are not naked like the rest of the world. And there is a two-fold garment wherewith God's remnant are arrayed, *viz.* a garment of imputed righteousness, and a garment of inherent holiness. By the first all their iniquities are covered, and they screened from the curse and condemnation of the law, and the stroke of avenging justice. By the last, *viz.* the garment of inherent holiness, their souls are beautified and adorned, the image of God restored, and they, like 'the King's daughter, made all glorious within.' And it is the last of these that is here principally intended.

2. It imports, that the garment which God gives his remnant is a pure and cleanly robe; and therefore called *white raiment*, Rev. iii. 18. and *fine linen*, chap. xix. 8. Speaking of the bride, *the Lamb's wife*, it is said, that 'to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, pure and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.' So that ye see *white* is the livery wherewith Christ clothes his little remnant: and, Rev. vii. 9. they are said to be *clothed with white robes*.

3. That sin is of a defiling and polluting nature. As mire and filth defile our garments, so doth sin defile and pollute our souls, and render us vile and loathsome

loathsome in the sight of God. Hence it is commonly called *uncleanness*; Zech. xiii. 1. 'There is a fountain opened to the house of David, for to take away sin and uncleanness.' It is the abominable thing which God's soul doth hate, and is more loathsome in his sight, than the most detestable things in nature are unto us.

4. That it may be the lot of the Lord's people to live and walk among a people, the generality of whom are polluting and defiling themselves; for this is the commendation of the remnant here, that though the body of this church was corrupted, yet they had not gone along with them. Thus it fared with Noah in the old world, and with Lot in Sodom; and the prophet Isaiah, chap. vi. he cries out, 'I dwell in the midst of a people of polluted lips.'

5. That even God's remnant are not without danger of defiling themselves with the sins and defections of their day. Sin it comes gilded with such fair and plausible pretences, and backed with such powerful motives and arguments, that even some of God's own remnant are not only in danger, but some of them may be actually ensnared and defiled therewith; and, no doubt, some that had the root of the matter in Sardis, were tainted with the corruptions of that church; as I doubt not but many in our own church, who have made very wide steps, are notwithstanding dear and near unto God.

6. That foul garments are very unbecoming and unsuitable unto God's remnant; for they that *name the name of Christ*, and profess to be his friends and favourers, they are bound to *depart from iniquity*. It brings up a reproach upon religion, and makes the
name

name of God to be blasphemed, when any of God's remnant make a wrong step: as you see in the case of David; his murder and adultery opened the mouths of the wicked in his day, and made the enemy to blaspheme. And I am sure it cannot but be bitter to any that belong to God, when, through their untenderness, the way of God is evil spoken of.

7. A careful study of universal obedience unto all known and commanded duties. God's remnant are of David's mind and principle, they "have a respect 'to all God's commandments;' his law is the rule and standard of their walk, it is 'a light unto their feet, and a lamp unto their paths;' and they are always breathing after more and more conformity thereunto, saying with David, 'O that my ways 'were directed to keep thy statutes!' They study to have a gospel-adorning conversation, and that 'their 'light may so shine before men, that others seeing 'their good works, may glorify their Father which is 'in heaven.'

8. A holy caution and tenderness in guarding against all sin, especially the prevailing sins of the day and generation wherein they live. They will not 'walk according to the course of the world,' but they are 'transformed in the renewing of their 'minds;' they keep at a distance from common defections, errors in doctrine, profanity in practice, and innovations in the worship of God; they will not so much as give their consent unto these abominations, but endeavour in their station to oppose them, and give their honest testimony against them. 'Keeping 'of the garments clean' in a declining time, it implies a steady adherence unto the truths, laws and ordinances

ordinances of Christ, and the government that he has appointed in his house: hence they are said to 'keep the word of his patience.' They will not sell one hoof of divine truth, no, not though it should cost them the warmest blood of their heart: they will 'buy the truth' at any rate, but sell it at no rate. It implies, that they have supplies of covenanted strength given them, to uphold and keep them from defiling their garments; for they are not able to keep themselves, no, 'the way of man is not in himself;' it is 'the Lord that keepeth the feet of his saints,' when 'the wicked shall be silent in darkness;' yea, 'they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,' 1 Pet. i. 5. which implies a keeping them as in a garrison: 'The Lord Jehovah is their strength,' and 'the munitions of rocks' round about them.

9. Lastly, It imports the mortification of sin in the root and fruit of it, together with a holy care to have grace improved and exercised, till it be crowned with glory; for 'he that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself,' &c. And thus ye see what is imported in keeping of the garments clean.

IV. The *fourth* thing proposed, was, to *inquire a little into the import of the consolatory promise made unto the remnant that keep their garments clean*; 'They shall walk with me in white,' saith the Lord; that is, as I told you in the explication of the words, 'they shall be admitted to share of my glory at death and judgment.' But I shall endeavour more particularly to inquire into the import of this promise. And, 1. What is imported in walking with Christ?

And,

And, 2. What in walking with him in white?

First. What is imported in walking *with him*?

1. It necessarily supposeth the soul's subsistence in a separate state, or after its separation from the body, otherwise it could not be said to *walk with him*. This is one of the fundamental truths of our religion, which Christ himself proved and maintained against the Sadducees, from that scripture, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; God is not,' says he, 'the God of the dead, but of the living.' No sooner are the souls of God's remnant divorced from their bodies, but, by the ministry of angels, they are carried into Abraham's bosom.

2. Their walking with Christ, not only supposes the soul's existence in a separate state, but also its activity, for it *walks* with Christ. The spirits of just men, upon their separation from the body, are made perfect; and so perfect, as they 'serve him day and night in his holy temple,' with infinitely more activity and liveliness, than when they were coopt up in the prison of the body; which, in this state of sin and imperfection, is a dead weight, as it were, upon the soul, in the service of God.

3. Their walking with Christ, it implies perfect peace and agreement between Christ and them; for 'how can two walk together, except they be agreed?' The Lord's people, while here, are many times under the affrightening apprehensions of his anger and displeasure, which makes them to cry out with David, Psal. lxxvii. 9. 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.' But there will be no such complaint in heaven:

ven : no, no ; there will not be the least grudge in his heart ; or frown in his countenance, through eternity ; nothing but a perpetual smile of his reconciled countenance.

4. It implies intimacy : which is more than agreement ; for there may be a good understanding, where there is little intimacy and familiarity. But the saints in glory, they shall *walk with Christ* ; that is, he and they will be very intimate one with another. This intimacy is begun on earth ; for sometimes, even in the wilderness, he brings them into the chamber of presence, and allows them sweet fellowship with himself ; sometimes they ‘ sit down under his shadow with great delight.’ But this intimate fellowship shall be consummate and completed in heaven, where all veils shall be rent, and all clouds shall be for ever dispelled, and nothing shall remain to interrupt the blessed familiarity betwixt him and them : then that word shall be fully accomplished, John xvii. 23. ‘ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.’

5. It implies, that they shall be in the presence of Christ : and this is an addition to intimacy : for two intimate friends may be at a distance one from another. The Lord’s people, while in the body, are said to be ‘ absent from the Lord.’ But then they shall be at home ; he and they shall dwell together through eternity, in the mansions of glory, ‘ the house not made with hands.’ So much Christ tells his disciples, John xii. 26. ‘ Where I am, there shall also my servants be.’ And, John xiv. 3. ‘ I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.’

6. It

6. It implies, that they shall be privileged with the sight of Christ; for two cannot well walk together without seeing one another. Then they shall see the man Christ 'exalted at his Father's right hand, far 'above all principalities and powers, and every name 'that is named, not only in this world, but also in 'that which is to come.' This is a privilege insured unto the little remnant by Christ's own prayer, John xvii. 24. 'Father, I will that these whom thou 'hast given me, may be with me where I am; 'that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.' O how ravishing a sight will this be, to behold the glory of Christ in heaven! When he was transfigured upon mount Tabor, 'his face did 'shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the 'light:' what will he be on mount Zion above, when he shall be seen with all his robes of glory, and all his heavenly retinue attending him?

7. 'They shall walk with me,' it implies full pleasure, satisfaction, and complacency; for walking is an act of recreation. Heaven is a place of joy and pleasure, Psal. xvi. 11. 'In thy presence there is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures 'for evermore.' Then the joy of the Lord shall not only enter into them, but they shall enter into the joy of their Lord: 'The ransomed of the Lord 'shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy 'upon their heads.'

Secondly, What is imported in walking with him in white?

Ans. 1. That then all their black and beggarly garments shall be laid aside. A body of sin and death shall not then molest them; they shall not any more

more complain of the errors of their hearts, or the iniquity of their heels: no; they shall be 'presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.'

2. White is a badge of purity and innocency: 'They shall walk with me in white;' that is, they shall not only lay aside their beggarly garments, but they shall be 'clothed with change of raiment.' Perfect holiness shall then be their ornament: 'They shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work;' and, like the 'king's daughter, they shall be all glorious within:' they who had 'lien among the pots, shall become like the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold;' yea, they shall 'shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.'

3. White is a badge of victory, as we told you in the explication of the words. Rev. vii. 9. the triumphant company there, 'of all nations, tongues, and kindreds, they stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands,' as a sign of their complete victory over all their enemies, whether outward or inward. Sin is an enemy that the believer has many a hot conflict with, while here; but in heaven, the 'inhabitants are all forgiven their iniquities,' there is no more sin, Rev. xxii. As for Satan, that grand enemy, that went about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour them, they shall then tread him under their feet: 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge angels?' saith the apostle. And as for the world, they shall never any more be ensnared either with its frowns or flatteries.

4. White is a badge of honour. The Romans clothed

clothed their nobility in white, as ye heard. O what honour is reserved for the saints of God, his little remnant! They shall be honoured with a place among them that stand by in the new Jerusalem; yea, they shall be honoured with the *white stone*, and the *new name*; they shall sit with Christ upon his throne, Rev. iij. 21. They shall be honoured with a crown of burnished glory: 'When the chief Shepherd shall appear, we shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away.' They shall be honoured with a kingdom: 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.' They shall be honoured to be assessors with Christ at the last judgment: 'Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?' they will applaud the Judge in all his proceedings, and cry, 'True and righteous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty:' then that passage will be fully accomplished, Psal. cxlix. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 'Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the Heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord.'

5. White was a garment appointed for the priests under the law, when they were to minister about holy things. The saints of God they are all *priests*, Rev. i. 5. 6. 'Unto him that loved us, and hath made us kings and priests unto God.' And as *priests* in the heavenly temple, their continual work shall

shall be, to offer up eternal sacrifices of praise unto God, and the Lamb. There every bird in every bush shall sing, and say, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood: Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.'

6. We find the angels frequently appearing in white. Acts i. 10. while the disciples are looking towards heaven after their exalted Lord, 'behold, two men,' that is, two angels in the form of men, 'stood by them in white apparel.' So the saints, they 'shall walk with Christ in white;' they shall be like the angels of heaven: Matth. xxii. 30. 'In the resurrection they are as the angels of God in heaven.' The original word signifies, they shall be *equal to angels*, or *angels mates*. Like angels they shall not be liable to hunger, thirst, weariness, or such like bodily infirmities. The angels are said to 'behold the face of God in heaven;' so shall ye who are God's little remnant: 'Now ye see darkly as through a glass, but then ye shall see face to face.' The angels serve God with the greatest voluntariness and freedom, with the greatest activity and nimbleness; for 'he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire:' so shall the saints in glory; they shall do the will of God, as it is done by the angels in heaven.

7. We find Christ sometimes appearing in white, particularly at his transfiguration, 'his countenance did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.' And so it may import this much, they 'shall walk with me in white;' that is, there shall be a blessed conformity between them and me in glory.

ry. Rev. xix. 11. 14. Christ is there represented as mounted upon 'a white horse; and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.' Christ, and all his redeemed company, shall be clothed with the same livery: 1 John iii. 2. 'When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' Their souls shall resemble him in righteousness and true holiness; yea, 'their vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body.'

8. Lastly, White has a great reflection of light with it when the sun shines upon it. O how bright and dazzling will the glory of the saints be in that day, when the Sun of righteousness shall shine upon them with a meridian splendor! Christ will then 'be admired in his saints;' for they shall 'shine forth like the sun, and like the brightness of the firmament; the beauty of the Lord their God' will then 'be upon them;' and such beauty as shall eternally astonish and confound the wicked, who contemned them upon earth, and did not reckon them worthy to 'sit with the dogs of their flock.' And this much for the fourth thing.

V. The *fifth* thing was, to *inquire into the connection between the duty and the privilege, between keeping the garments clean, and walking with Christ in white.*

1. Then negatively, you would know, that there is no connection of merit, as if our 'keeping of clean garments' did deserve that we should 'walk with Christ in white:' no, no; let 'every mouth be stopped,' for 'all the world is guilty before God;' and

and therefore can merit nothing but wrath and vengeance at the hand of God : ' By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified,' or saved ; it is by the merits of Christ, his doing and dying, as the surety of the little remnant, that they are brought ' to walk with him in white.' But though there be no connection of merit, yet,

2. And positively, there is, *1st*, A connection of decree or purpose in this matter. God, by an unalterable decree, has ordained, that they who are holy shall be happy ; that ' they who keep their garments clean, shall walk with him in white : ' 2 Theff. ii. 13. ' God hath from the beginning chosen us to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' *2dly*, There is a connection of promise, as well as of purpose. Ye have them linked together in this promise in the text, and every where almost through the scriptures of truth : ye have a cluster of these promises in the second and third of the Revelation, ' To him that overcometh' (which is the same thing with keeping the garments clean) ' will I give to eat of the hidden manna.' And this link is so strong, that it can never be broken ; for it is one of these ' immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie.' *3dly*, There is a connection of meetness or congruity. It is suitable that those who are holy should be happy ; that they who have white garments here, should be clothed with white hereafter. It is suitable unto the nature of God ; for he ' cannot behold iniquity, neither can evil dwell with him : ' none but holy ones shall enjoy a holy God. It is suitable unto the work of heaven ; for ' no unclean thing can enter the gates of the new Jerusalem : '

‘Jerusalem :’ to this purpose is the last clause of our text, ‘They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy,’ or *meet*, as the word may be rendered, Col. i. 12. ‘Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.’ 4^{thly}, There is a connection of evidence. Holiness, or clean garments, is an evidence of the soul’s title or claim to glory ; for ‘whom he sanctified, them he also glorified.’ ‘Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God ? and who shall stand in his holy place ?’ The answer is, ‘He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart,’ Psal. xxiv. 3. 4. 5^{thly}, There is a connection of legacy. Christ, by his latter will, has insured the kingdom to his little remnant, that keep their garments clean : Luke xxii. 28. 29. ‘Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.’

VI. The *sixth* thing is the application. And the first use shall be of *information*, in these particulars :

1. See hence, holiness is to be studied and pursued, however it may be ridiculed, and mocked at by a profane world ; for it is they that ‘do not defile their garments’ that ‘shall walk with Christ in white.’ The blind world is ready to imagine, that the way to heaven is not so strait and narrow as ministers call it ; that there needs not be so much ado, and all is but a piece of needless nicety, preciseness, and the like. But remember, Sirs, that strict holiness will carry the day at the long-run ; and ye that are for a lax religion,

religion, and a broad way to heaven, will at length land in hell, unless mercy and repentance prevent. 'Walk circumspectly' therefore, 'not as fools, but as 'wise,' &c.

2. See from this doctrine, that they labour under a damnable mistake, who think or say, that it is 'a vain' or 'unprofitable thing to serve the Lord,' and to keep his way; for they that 'walk with Christ' here, shall partake of his glory hereafter: 'Godliness,' saith the apostle, 'is great gain, having the promise of the life 'that now is, and of that which is to come.' Religion carries a reward in its bosom, beside the reward that is prepared for the saints in the life to come: 'In keeping of thy commandments,' says David, 'there is a great reward. O how great is the goodness thou hast laid up for them that fear thee!' &c. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God 'hath prepared for them that love him,' 1 Cor. ii. 9.

3. We may see, that gospel-purity and holiness is not such a common thing as the world apprehend; for there are but 'a few names,' few persons that are 'helped to 'keep their garments clean.' My friends, beware of taking every thing for holiness, that has the shadow and appearance of it. Some are ready to think that their garments are clean enough, if they keep free of gross scandalous outbreakings, such as lying, swearing, stealing, uncleanness, and the like; but the proud Pharisee came this length, who said, 'God, I thank thee, I am not as other men; I am no 'extortioner, adulterer, or injurious person,' &c. Some think their garments clean, if they be moral in their walk, just in their dealings between man and man. I

with indeed there were more morality among those that profess the name of Christ. But, O Sirs, mere morality, in the highest degree now attainable, comes infinitely short of the nature of true holiness; it is quite another thing: and to put morality in the room of gospel-holiness, is in effect to renounce Christ and the covenant of grace, and to run back to Adam's covenant, for life and salvation. Some think their garments clean enough, because of some personal reformation that they have made in their outward walk; they have left off lying, swearing, drunkenness, uncleanness, and the like. But this will not amount to true holiness. Herod, he reformed his life, and 'did many things' through the ministry of John the Baptist, and yet beheaded him at last. Some reckon upon their diligence in the outward duties of religion; they read, hear, pray, communicate, and run the round of outward performances, and thereupon conclude, that they are holy persons. But who more diligent in the externals of religion than the Pharisees, who 'fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed?' and yet Christ tells us, that 'except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.' So that, I say, gospel-holiness is no common thing.

4. See hence, that the division of mankind, and particularly of these that live in the visible church, between Christ and the devil, is very unequal as to the number; for the greatest part, even of the visible church, go to the devil's share, for there are 'but a few in Sardis that do not defile their garments.' Christ's flock is 'a little flock: I will take them one
' of

‘of a city, and two of a family,’ or tribe, ‘and bring them to Zion.’ It is true, they will be a great company, and make a goodly appearance, when they shall be gathered by the angels from the four winds of heaven; but yet they are only like the gleanings after the vintage, in comparison of the vast multitudes of mankind that run in the broad way to destruction.

5. See hence what it is that sweetens the pale countenance of the king of terrors to believers; it is this, they see, that upon the back of death, they will be admitted to ‘walk with Christ in white.’ This made the apostle to long so vehemently for his dissolution, saying, ‘I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.’ Faith’s views and prospect of this makes the believer to triumph over death, as a vanquished and slain enemy, saying, ‘O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?’

6. See hence what they may expect upon the back of death, who habitually wallow in the puddle of sin. It is only they that have *clean garments*, that *shall walk with Christ* in glory; and therefore it inevitably follows, that the gates of glory shall be shut upon you: Rev. xxi. 27. ‘There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.’ And, vers. 8. of the same chapter, ‘The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.’ O Sirs! ye that live and die in this condition, with the guilt and filth of

fin lying on your consciences, ye will find a sling in death which will stick in your souls through eternity : for it is only God's little remnant, ' whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of ' the Lamb,' that shall triumph with him in glory ; while ye that wallow in sin now, shall be found weltering in the flames of Tophet.

7. See hence, that honesty is the best policy in a declining time ; for it is only the honest-hearted remnant that shall walk with Christ above. Keep God's ways, Sirs, whatever come ; and beware of sinful shifts to shun the cross : ' They that walk uprightly, shall ' walk surely ;' whereas they who think to shun danger by shifting duty, they really run themselves into greater danger and inconveniencies, than these which they imagined to avoid.

USE 2d, may be of *lamentation*, that there are so many foul garments among us at this day. Alas ! Sirs, may we not say, that there are but *a few names* in Scotland, that have not defiled their garments with the corruptions and pollutions of the time ? All ranks have corrupted their ways, magistrates, ministers, and people. May not the character which God gave of Israel of old, be too justly applied to us, Is. i. 4. that we are ' a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, ' a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, ' who have provoked the holy One of Israel unto anger, and are gone away backward ?' I cannot now stand to shew wherein we have defiled our garments. Has not the land been defiled with the blood of many of the saints of God under the late reigns, from which it is not as yet purged ? Is not the whole land defiled with breach of solemn national engagements,

ments, while these solemn covenants have been scandalously burnt in the capital city of the nation, and that by the countenance and command of authority? And are there not many at this day amongst us, who profess to be of the communion of the church of Scotland, that do renounce and disown the obligation of these solemn ties? Are not many defiling their garments with Arminian and Socinian heresies? others with a superstitious worship, which, to the reproach of our holy religion, is tolerate among us by law? Have not many defiled the garments in our land, with a customary swearing by the name of God? others by juggling with God in the matter of solemn oaths, adjuring a Popish Pretender, with a design to put themselves in a better capacity to do him service, and promote his interest? Others have, even in this province, lately defiled their garments, by putting their hands to scandalous libels, by way of address to the sovereign; wherein they present ministers as rebels against authority, for appointing fasts, and preaching against the sins of the time, and for giving warning to people of the tokens of God's anger that are visible among us. And, alas! may we not all lament, that we have defiled our garments, by the breach of sacramental and sick-bed vows? But I must not stand on these things.

USE 3^d, is of *trial* and *examination*. Try, Sirs, whether you be among God's little remnant, that are keeping their garments clean, when all round about you are defiling themselves. And, for your trial, I offer you the few following marks of God's remnant.

1. God's remnant are a people unto whom Christ

is exceeding precious. His very *name* is unto them as ointment poured forth; they love to hear of him, they love to speak of him, and their meditations of him are sweet; 'the desire of their soul is unto him,' and the remembrance of his name;' and they are ready to say with David, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? &c.' or with Paul, 'I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.'

2. God's remnant are a people that do not reckon themselves at home while they are here-away. This is not their proper country; but 'they look for a better country, that is, an heavenly,' Heb. xi. 16. They 'look for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God,' vers. 10. See this to be the character of God's remnant, vers. 13. the apostle tells us of these worthies, that they 'confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.' This confession David makes, Psal. cxix. 19. 'I am a stranger in the earth, hide not thy commandments from me.' So then, Sirs, if your home be here, you are none of God's remnant; if your thoughts and affections be confined within the narrow limits of time. God's remnant are a people that 'are coming up from the wilderness;' they are always ascending and mounting heaven-ward, in their affections and desires: they 'look not at the things that are seen, but the things that are not seen.'

3. God's remnant are a people that speak and think much on God. See this to be their character, Mal. iii. 16. 'Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was

' was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.' Try yourselves by this. It is the character of the wicked, that 'God is not in all their thoughts;' and he is as seldom in their mouths, except in a way of profanation. But God's remnant, I say, they think much on God; and the thoughts of God, O how precious are they unto their souls! Psal. cxxxix. 17. and out of the abundance of their hearts their mouths speak honourably and reverently of him. They will speak to one another of his word, of his works, of his providences, and of his ordinances; their 'lips are like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.'

4. God's remnant are a praying people: Psal. xxiv. 6. 'This the generation that seeketh thy face, O Jacob,' or, 'O God of Jacob:' whereas it is given as the character of the wicked, Psal. xiv. 4. that they 'call not upon God.' They either live in the total neglect of this duty; or if they do it at all, it is in a hypocritical, formal, and overly manner. But God's remnant, they seek the face of God; they seek him with fervency, with 'truth in the inward parts;' they seek him believingly; they seek him constantly and perseveringly, which the hypocrite will not do; Job xxvii. 10. 'Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?'

5. God's remnant are a mourning people. They mourn over their own sins, in the first place: Ezek. vii. 16. The remnant of Jacob 'that escape, they shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys, every one mourning for their iniquity.' They

mourn over the errors of their hearts, and the iniquity of their lives, are ready to cry out, 'Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold on me,' &c. And then they mourn, not only for their own personal sins, but for public sins; the sins of others, whereby the land is defiled: 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law; I beheld transgressors, and was grieved.' That is the character of God's remnant, ye may see from Ezek. ix. 4. 'Go through the city, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations done in the midst thereof.' And then they mourn for the calamities and desolation of Zion, when they see the bear out of the wood wasting her, and the wild beasts out of the forest devouring her: Psal. cxxxvii. 1. 'By the rivers of Babylon we sat down, and wept when we remembered Zion.' And then they mourn when they see ordinances corrupted, or God's candlestick in any measure removed, the Lord's people deprived of their wonted freedom and liberty in waiting upon him in these galleries: Zeph. iii. 18. 'I will gather them that are sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it was a burden.'

6. God's remnant are a people that will rather venture upon suffering than sinning. They rather venture to run the risk of displeasing kings and queens, potentates and parliaments, than venture upon the displeasing of God: they can rather venture on the rack of outward torments, than upon the rack of an accusing conscience. See this to be the character of God's remnant in the three children, Dan. iii. &c.

And

and Moses, Heb. xi. 27. 'forfook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of a king.' Many other marks of God's remnant might be insisted upon. They are a people that cannot live without Christ, and fellowship and communion with him, Cant. iii. 1 Job xxiii. 3. 'O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!' They are a people that will not rest in their attempts, but press towards the uttermost of grace and holiness, Phil. iii. 12. They press after more nearness unto Christ, Cant. viii. 1. They love holiness for itself, Psal. cxix. 140. Christ for himself; yea, they love heaven for Christ and holiness. In a word, they love holiness, be the event what it will.

USE 4th, is of *exhortation*. Is it so, that God's remnant who are privileged to *walk with Christ in white*, are such as keep their garments clean? O then! let me exhort all hearing me, particularly you who have been professing yourselves among the number of God's remnant, by drawing near to him in the holy ordinance of his supper; let me, I say, exhort you to keep your garments clean; be exhorted to the study of true gospel-holiness, both in heart and life. And, by way of motive, I would have you to consider these things following.

MOT. 1. Consider that ye are in continual hazard of defiling your garments. Ye are in danger from every air: As, 1st, Ye are in danger from the world. There are many things in the world that are of a very defiling and polluting nature. There are many polluting opinions broached in the world, which go very glib away with nature, and which nature is very ready to catch at and embrace; as, That God is

altogether made up of mercy, and will never damn any of his creatures: That Christ died for all: That morality runs parallel with grace: That an empty profession is enough to save folk: That it is beter to keep the body whole than the conscience pure: That to be zealous for religion, is to be righteous overmuch. These, and many other such opinions, are of a polluting nature; and we are in danger of defiling ourselves with them. And then the examples of the world are very infectious: the examples of magistrates and ministers, as ye see from Hof. v. 1. 'Hear ye this, O priests, give ye ear, O house of the king: because ye have been a snare on Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor.' And then ye are in danger from the example of professors, who perhaps have a great name for religion in the church of God. O! will ye say, such a man doth so and so, and why may not I do it also? But remember, Sirs, that there are many hypocrites in the church of God, that go under a mask of religion. And supposing them to have the reality of grace, yet they may be under a spiritual decay; they may be sadly deserted of God: and do ye think, that in this case they are to be imitated? And besides, suppose them to be never such eminent persons, yet according to the apostle's direction, we are to be *followers of them* no farther than they are *followers of Christ*. And besides, we are in danger from the frowns and flatteries of the world. If the world cannot get us allured unto sin by its enticing promises, it will study to drive us into a compliance, by threats of trouble and persecution. Thus, I say, we are in imminent danger from the world. The apostle James exhorts us 'to keep ourselves unspotted from

‘from the world,’ chap. i. 27. 2dly, Ye are in danger from Satan, that subtle and malicious enemy, that ‘goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he ‘may devour.’ He waits for your halting, and is always ready to trip up your heels. And I assure you, Sirs, if ye have got any love-token from the Lord at this occasion, this enemy will do his best, or worst rather, to you and it. It was but a little after Peter had been fasting with Christ, at his holy ordinance of the supper, that Christ told him, Luke xxii. 31. ‘Simon, Simon, Satan hath sought to winnow thee ‘as wheat. And therefore ye had need to be on your guard as to this enemy, and labour not to be *ignorant of his devices.* 3dly, Ye are in danger of defiling your garments from your own hearts. My friends, would not that city be exposed to great danger, which is not only besieged with an army from without, but has a strong and powerful party within, that keeps a correspondence with the enemy without, and is ready to comply with all his demands? Just so is it with us: we are not only besieged with the world, and with Satan, who are our enemies without; but there is a strong party of indwelling sin and corruption within us, that is ready, upon all occasions, to betray us into our enemies hands. This made David cry out, ‘Who can understand his errors?’ and Paul, ‘Wretched man that I am, who ‘will deliver me from the body of this death!’ So much for the first motive.

MOT. 2. By keeping your garments clean, ye comply and fall in with God’s great design in all his dispensations towards you, whether more immediate, or mediate. God’s great end in all, is to bring his

people to the study of gospel purity and holiness. This is the design of his electing some of the posterity of Adam from all eternity; Eph. i. 4. 'He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love.' It is a very foolish way of arguing that some people have, If I be elected, I shall be saved, let me live as I list; for God, like all other wise agents, not only decrees the end, but the means leading unto that end. Now, holiness is the King's high way, in which he has ordained and decreed to bring the elect to glory: 2. Thess. ii. 13. 'God hath chosen us from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.' This is the design of redemption. Christ did not die, Sirs, to purchase a latitude to us to sin: no, no: Tit. ii. 14. 'He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' This is the design of our creation. Why did ye get a being, but that ye might glorify and serve God? 'This people have I formed for myself, that they may shew forth my praises.' And this is not only the design of our first, but of our second creation; 'for he hath created us in Christ unto good works.' This is the design of our effectual calling; 'for God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness: no; he hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.' This is the design of the whole word of God. Why has God privileged us with his statutes and testimonies, but that they be 'a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path,' to keep us out of the polluting ways of sin? Psal. cxix. 9. 'Whereby shall

‘shall a young man cleanse his way, but by taking
‘heed thereto according to thy word?’ This is the
design of the promises of the word. However carnal
persons may make the promises a pillow of security,
yet God’s design in giving them is, to excite his peo-
ple to keep clean garments: 2. Cor. vii. 1. ‘Dearly
‘beloved, having these promises, let us cleanse our-
‘selves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, per-
‘fecting holiness in the fear of God.’ This is the
design of the threatenings of the word, that so men,
knowing the terror of God, may be persuaded to keep
at a distance from sin, the abominable thing that his
soul hates, and may not defile their garments there-
with. This is the design of all providences whereby
God exercises his people. Why doth God cast thee
into the furnace? O man! his design is to purge
away thy dross: Is. xxvii. 9. ‘By this therefore
‘shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is
‘all the fruit to take away his sin.’ The Lord cha-
stens us, that we may be *partakers of his holiness*,
Heb. xii. 10. This is the design, not only of cross,
but of favourable providences. The goodness of God
should *lead us to repentance*, and lays a deep obliga-
tion on us to stand off from sin, which is offensive to
our gracious benefactor. This is the design not only
of all providences, but of all ordinances, and of the
whole dispensation of the grace of God in the gos-
pel: Tit. ii. 11, 12. ‘For the grace of God that
‘bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teach-
‘ing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,
‘we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in
‘this present world.’ This is the design, not only
of the preaching of the word, but of the administra-
tion

tion of the sacraments. In baptism, we are solemnly devoted to the service of God, and are engaged to walk as those that are called by *the name of Christ*, who are bound *to depart from iniquity*. And in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, we solemnly renew, before God, angels, and men, our baptismal engagements, and swear to keep our garments clean from the pollution of sin; and that by laying our hands on the body and blood of the Lord Jesus. This is the design of every frown, and of every smile. Doth God at any time fill thee with *joy and peace in believing*? lifts he up the light of his countenance upon thee? the language of this is, O do not defile thy garments! 'God will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints, but let them not return again to folly.' And why doth God at any time hide his face, and leave thee in the dark, but to engage you to more tenderness in time to come, in keeping at a distance from these pollutions, whereby he has been provoked to forsake thee? Thus, I say, if ye do not keep your garments clean, ye counteract the great design of God in all his dispensations towards you. How dangerous is it to be found fighting against God?

MOT. 3. Consider the dismal effects that will follow upon your defiling your garments. 1st, Ye will ruin your reputation, and render your names unfavoury in the world. And this is no small loss; for *a good name*, says Solomon, *is as precious ointment*, and renders a man capable to do service unto God in his day and generation. Prov. vi. 33. it is said of the adulterer, 'A wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.' When
 professors

professors of religion, or ministers, defile their garments by sin, especially sins of a public nature, they wound their reputation, bring a reproach upon themselves that is not easily wiped away; and not only so, but make the word of the Lord, in their mouths, to be contemned and despised. Ye may read a scripture for this, Mal. ii. 8. 9. it is spoken of the priests of that day; 'Ye are departed out of the way: ye have caused many to stumble at the law: ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law.' 2^{dly}, Ye will stain and pollute your souls, which ye ought to keep pure as a holy temple unto God. And how dangerous a thing this is, ye may see from 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 'Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.' My friends, you have been solemnly consecrating your souls and bodies unto God, as his temple; and if any of you shall after this 'return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that seemed to be washed, to wallow again in the puddle of sin,' ye run a very dreadful risk. Utter destruction from the Lord, and from the glory of his presence, is abiding all these that are hypocrites in heart. And dreadful temporal destruction from the Lord may overtake even his own children, who do defile their garments: 'For this cause many are weak and sickly, and many sleep.' 3^{dly}, Ye will break your peace, and mar your comfort. If ye keep
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not your garments clean, ye may provoke the Lord to fill you with terrors, and so cast such a spark of hell-fire in your bosoms, as shall make you roar, and cry out of 'broken bones,' with David; or with Job, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.' 4thly, Ye will cast a blot upon religion, and on the good ways of the Lord. If ye who have been professing to own Christ at his table, shall be found defiling your garments, by lying, swearing, drunkenness, or the like, what will the graceless world say? they will conclude, that professors are but a company of hypocrites; that religion is nothing but a piece of trick and imposture. Ye will be a blemish to christian society: 'These are spots,' says the apostle, 'in your feasts of charity.' And he speaks of some, who, through their untenderness, made the ways of the Lord to be 'evil spoken of.' 5thly, Ye will dishonour Christ, that glorious Master whom ye have been professing to own. Hence the Lord complains of the children of Israel, that they, by their wickedness, caused his 'name to be polluted among the Heathen.' David's sin made the name of God to be blasphemed and reproached. 6thly, By polluting your garments, ye will 'offend the generation of the righteous;' and 'it were better for you that a mill-stone were hanged about your necks, and ye cast into the midst of the sea,' than that ye should 'offend one of Christ's little ones.' It is a dangerous thing to grieve the hearts of these that are dear unto God; for God will grieve their hearts; and he will resent it, if any other do it by their untenderness. 7thly, Ye will harden others in their sins. When
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the wicked see professors, ministers, going along with them, they conclude that their way is the best of it, and preferable unto the way of religion. Thus ye see the dismal effects that will follow upon your defiling your garments.

MOT. 4. Consider the great advantages that shall accrue unto you by keeping your garments clean. *1st*, It will yield you great peace. Peace in life; for 'as many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be upon them.' Peace in the midst of all troubles: 'This is our rejoicing, the testimony of a good conscience.' Peace at death: Psal. xxxvii. 37. 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.' Peace after death: Is. lvii. 2. we are told, that 'the righteous,' at death, 'they enter into peace; they rest upon their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.' Peace at the last judgment: it is only the cleanly remnant to whom the Lord will say then, 'Lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption is now come.' *2^{dly}*, By keeping clean garments, ye will be in a continual fitness for maintaining fellowship and communion with God in any ordinance of his appointment; for it is the man that 'hath clean hands, and a pure heart, that shall stand on God's holy hill,' and have a place in his tabernacle. And not only so, but it will fill you with a holy boldness and confidence, in your approaches unto God in the ordinances of his appointment: Job. xi. 14, 15. 'If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,' &c. *3^{dly}*, The influences of ordinances will stay the longer upon you that ye keep your garments clean. What is the reason why the impression of any thing of God that

that we meet with in ordinances doth so soon evanish, like the morning cloud? The reason is, the untenderness of our walk: we lie down among the pots of sin, and this makes God to withdraw from us. We read of some mountains, that are so high, that if men drew figures in the sand upon the tops of them, they will abide for many years. The reason is, they are so high, that they are above the winds and rains. O Sirs, if we were living and walking on high with God, the impression of ordinances would stay longer with us than they do. *4thly*, By keeping your garments clean, ye will perhaps save the souls of others, and commend religion unto them. Hence is that of Christ, Matth. v. 16. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.' *5thly*, By keeping your garments clean, ye find more strength to keep yourselves; 'for the fear of the Lord is strength to the upright.' If ye keep God's way, he will 'keep you in the hour of temptation,' Rev. iii. 10. God will keep you by his power through faith unto salvation. *6thly*, After a little time is elapsed, ye shall be clothed in white, and walk with Christ in the New Jerusalem, according to his promise in the text.

Now, I conclude all with directions and advices, in order to your keeping of your garments clean.

1. Be persuaded of your own utter inability to keep your garments clean by your own power, or the strength of created grace; for 'the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps.'

2. Take care that ye be united to Christ the fountain

tain of holiness; for ye do but wash the Ethiopian, while ye attempt to make yourselves clean and holy, while ye grow on the root of the old Adam. Ye may indeed wash the outside of the cup and platter, but ye will remain filthy still in the sight of God, till ye be created in Christ, the true root of sanctification: 'Can a man gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' The tree must be good, before the fruit be good.

3. Being united unto Christ, ye must make daily use of him by faith. Do not think that when ye have first believed in Christ, your work is done: no; your life must be a life of faith. By faith we live, by faith we stand, by faith we work, by faith we fight; and whatever we do in word or deed, we must do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Ye must be always building up yourselves in the holy faith, and going on from faith to faith; and whenever ye have, through infirmity, or the prevalency of temptation, defiled your garments, be sure to run by faith unto the blood of sprinkling, that ye may get your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.

4. Set God continually before you, and keep up the impression of his all-seeing eye on your spirits: Psal. xvi. 8. 'I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.'

5. Be much in viewing and meditating on the dismal and terrible effects of sin; how it did cast angels out of heaven, Adam out of paradise, and brought God's curse upon all his posterity; how it brought a deluge on the old world, Sodom and Gomorrah burnt
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by fire and brimstone; how it made the earth to swallow up Corah, Dathan, and Abiram.

6. If ye would keep your garments clean, O then beware of going to the utmost length of Christian liberty: it is dangerous to come too near God's marches. We should take heed to ourselves, even in the use of things that are in themselves lawful: many things are lawful, but every thing lawful is not at all times expedient. Ye would shun every appearance of evil; do not stand in the way of temptations, or occasions of sin. And in particular, take care to avoid evil company; for 'can a man take fire in his bosom, and his cloaths not be burnt?'

7. Beware of giving your consent and countenance unto the sins of others; for hereby ye shall be partakers with them in their sins. We may not only defile our garments by personal sins, but by sins of others, when we encourage them in any evil way, when we assent or consent unto them, or do not faithfully warn and reprove them, or endeavour to reclaim them.

8. *Lastly*, Be importunate with God at the throne of grace for guidance and direction; for "unless the Lord keep the city, the watchmen watch in vain: unless his grace be sufficient for us, we will soon be carried down the stream of temptation and corruption: for 'the way of man is not in himself.' And therefore, I say, plead hard at the throne, that the Lord would keep you, who 'keeps the feet of his faints.' And for this end plead the promise that he has made to his people, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away

away from them to do them good ; but I will put
my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart
from me.' Zech. x. 12. 'I will strengthen them
in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his
name, saith the Lord.'



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THE BACKSLIDER CHARACTERISED;

O R,

The evil and danger of defection described.

A

SERMON preached at Dysart, on a thanksgiving-day after the sacrament, Monday October 7. 1714.

Heb. x. 38. *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

P R E F A C E.

THE following discourse was represented to the Commission, May 1725, by Mr. Alexander Anderson, as if it had been of such a turbulent or erroneous tendency, that he himself, preaching after me, was obliged publicly to contradict me. The following notes are, to the best of my remembrance, the ipsissima verba which I delivered at that time. Whether the doctrines contained therein deserved the character he gave them before the Reverend Commission, or if he had ground publicly to contradict, I submit to the judgment of the impartial world. Farewel.

JOHN vi. 66.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

IN the beginning of this chapter, our blessed Lord works a notable miracle; he feeds five thousand people

people with five loaves, and two fishes, twelve baskets of fragments remaining. The multitude is so taken with this miraculous entertainment, that they would needs make him a king. But our lowly King of Zion did not affect worldly grandeur, his kingdom not being of this world; therefore he withdraws himself, and passes over the sea to Capernaum. Many of the multitude, whom he had fed, followed him thither. And there our blessed Lord takes occasion to preach a very heavenly and spiritual sermon unto them, holding out the necessity of living and feeding by faith upon him, in order to everlasting life. These carnal hearers are exceedingly stumbled at the spirituality of his doctrine, looking upon it as a piece of unaccountable stuff and nonsense. Upon which they begin to drop off from him, as the evangelist remarks here, in the words of my text, 'From that time many of his disciples went back, &c.'

In which words we may notice, 1. A defection, or going back from Christ. 2. The season of it, *viz. From that time*, or, after he had preached the foregoing sermon. 3. The cause of it, implied in the time, *viz. the spirituality of his doctrine*. 4. The persons guilty of this defection, *viz. professed disciples*; and that not a few, but *many* of them. 5. The final and irrecoverable nature of their defection, they *walked no more with him*.

The words are plain and easy; and therefore there is no need of any critical explication. Wherefore, take this native observation from them, *viz.*

DOCT. *That there are some seasons, wherein many of Christ's pretended disciples do fall off from him, and*

and that finally and irrecoverably. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

In handling of this doctrine, I shall observe the order of the words, and speak a little,

I. Unto this defection, or falling off from Christ.

II. Inquire a little into the causes of it.

III. The seasons of it.

IV. The persons guilty of the defection, viz. the disciples.

V. Give a few characters of those who fall off finally, and walk no more with him.

VI. Apply the whole.

I. I say, I will speak a little 'unto this defection, or falling off from Christ.' And here I would, 1. Give you some of the scriptural names of it. 2. Condescend on the kinds and degrees of it. 3. Notice some of its ingredients. 4. Mention some of its concomitants.

First, I would give you some scriptural names by which it is called. And sometimes it is called *a looking back*: Luke ix. 62. 'No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven.' My friends, ye have been professing to set your faces heaven-ward; O be ye aware of casting a back-look upon your old lovers: Remember 'Lot's wife;' take heed that God do not set you up as monuments of his vengeance. Again, it is sometimes called *a turning back*: Lam. i. 8. 'Jerusalem sigheth, and turneth backward.' The way to heaven will not admit of a retreat; ye must still be pressing forward, whatever opposition may be in your way.

Again,

Again, sometimes it is called *a drawing back*: Heb. x. 38. 'If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' Moreover, it is called *a sliding back*; intimating, that the people that are not well buckled in religion stand upon slippery ground: Hof. xi. 7. 'My people are bent to backsliding from me.' Furthermore, it is called *a falling back*: H. xxviii. 13. 'The word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept, and line upon line; that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken:' and ye know a backward fall is exceedingly dangerous. Lastly, To mention no more, it is called *a turning aside*. It is said of Israel, that 'they quickly turned aside, like a deceitful bow;' which frustrates the design of the archer, by shooting away, or besides the mark. They who 'turn aside unto crooked ways,' whatever may be their pretences to religion, miss the mark of the same, even the 'mark and prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;' and, 'shall be led forth, and have their part with the workers of iniquity.'

Secondly, I come to condescend on the kinds and degrees of defections from Christ. And, not to multiply distinctions, which are more ready to confound than edify hearers, I shall only mention these two or three.

1. Defection from Christ is sometimes more universal and general, of the body of a church and nation together. Thus Ephesus, Rev. ii. is charged with falling from her first love. And the whole body of the Israelitish nation are engaged together in a defection, by going in to worship the idolatrous calves which Jeroboam erected at Dan and Bethel: and it

was so universal, that the prophet Elijah thought he had been left alone; though indeed the Lord tells him, that he had seven thousand in Israel which had not bowed the knee to Baal. And sometimes it is more special and particular, as when a single society, family, or particular person, enters upon a course of defection and backsliding from Christ and his ways: of which instances may be afterwards named.

2. Sometimes it is more open and avowed, in contradistinction from the former, by abandoning and relinquishing the very profession of religion which they once pretended to, and becoming openly wicked and flagitious, giving themselves loose reins in a way of sin. Or it is more hid and secret, when, though there be still a profession of religion kept up; yet the power of godliness is quite forsaken, and the heart maintains a close correspondence with sin, and lives in a secret trade of wickedness, inconsistent with the rules of Christianity.

3. There is a total, as also a partial defection or falling off from Christ. A total or final, is that of the wicked and reprobate, who, when they fall, are like lead, or a stone, falling into a deep water, which never rise again; as it is said of Pharaoh and his host, 'They sank like lead in the mighty waters: they make an utter shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. A partial defection is incident even to the godly themselves. I may call it *temporary*; for they may be left, for a considerable time, to make many woful steps of defection from Christ and his ways; as is plain from the instance of David, Peter, Abraham, and many others. But when they fall, they are like wood or cork falling into water, who though they sink

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at first, yet they rise again by faith and repentance, which influence the reformation of their lives, and which, in pursuit of the divine purpose of grace for their salvation, are actuated in them by the Holy Spirit, according to that, Psal. xxxvii. 24. Though he fall, he 'shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord up-
'holdeth him with his hand.' The defection here spoken of in the text, seems to have been of the first kinds of each division. It was general and public; for there was a great multitude of them, as we read in the beginning of the chapter: it was open and avowed; for they put a slight on Christ in the face of the sun: and it was total and final; and walked no more with him, nor looked after Christ any more.

Thirdly, I come to notice some ingredients of this defection here spoken of. And there appears to have been these things in it.

1. A dissatisfaction with Christ, and a vilipending both him and his way; and they said vers. 42. 'Is
'not his father, and his mother, and sisters with us?
'how then came he down from heaven?'

2. A murmuring and repining against the spirituality of his doctrine, out of a rooted enmity and prejudice against it: vers. 41. 'They murmur at him,
'because he said, I am the bread of life which came
'down from heaven:' and again, 'This it an hard
'saying, who can hear it?'

3. A formal disputing and arguing against his doctrine, as repugnant unto reason. They set up their reason as the standard of revelation, and will receive nothing but what they were able to comprehend; for 'they strove,' or disputed, 'among themselves, saying, How
'can this man give us his flesh to eat?' vers. 52.

4. A formal casting off with Christ, and turning back to their old way and trade of living, whereby their latter end was worse than their beginning; for 'they went back, and followed him no more,' as in the text.

Fourthly, I come to mention some concomitants of defection from Christ.

1. It is commonly accompanied with a halting and wavering between sin and duty, as Israel did between God and Baal: 'How long,' says Elijah to them, 'do ye halt between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him.' When this wavering befalls people, they cannot stand long; for 'a double minded man is unstabled in all his ways,' says James. 'Their heart is divided; therefore shall they be found faulty.'

2. It is commonly attended with a mercenary kind of spirit. For as secular and worldly interest is the spring of all their religion; so it is the spring of their apostasy and defection from it; as is plain from what our Lord tells his pretended disciples, 'Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.' Where this mercenary spirit prevails, folk will stand by Christ and religion as long as it will stand with their selfish and secular designs, but no longer. Christ, conscience, religion, and every thing, must truckle unto this at length.

3. It is attended with a stretching of Christian liberty to the uttermost pitch, and a dallying with the appearances of evil. O, will the man say, what needs all this needless nicety and preciseness? I may adventure thus far, and yet keep in both with God and
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a good conscience. Like Eve, who thought she might tamper with the temptation, without any hazard of a compliance; or Samson, who thought he might dally with Delilah, and keep in with God. O Sirs, it is dangerous going too near God's marches; for, as one says, he that will go all the length he may, when occasion serves, will go further than he ought.

4. It is attended with a snarling at reproofs. They cannot abide to have their sores ript up, and the evil of their ways discovered. Let ministers preach never such sound doctrine, yet if they point towards the airth where their defections lie, presently they are like wild bulls in a net, full of fury and resentment. We find too much of this, even in good men, when engaged in a partial defection. Afa was so irritated by the reproof of the prophet, that he casts him into prison, for telling him, that he was fallen from his former confidence in God, when the host of the Ethiopians came up against him. And the Galatians reckoned Paul their enemy, because he told them the truth.

5. With a snatching at the reputation of those that stand their ground, or who give any testimony against their defections: and if they can perceive any such making but the least wrong trip, they are sure to make it as open and public to the world as possible, and to represent it in the blackest character imaginable. It is a very true observe, That backsliders are commonly backbiters. They cannot abide to see any outshine themselves in holiness and tenderness; and therefore they lie at the catch, to wound the reputation of those that cannot run the same length with

themselves. This made David pray, 'Deliver me, O Lord, from all my transgressions, and make me not the reproach of the foolish: for when my foot slippeth, mine enemies do magnify themselves against me'.

6. Division is usually the concomitant and fruit of defection. If we should trace all divisions to their spring, whereby the bowels of the church of God have been rent, since the first ages of Christianity, we should still find them taking their rise from the bitter fountain of defection. What was it but the defections of some in the church of Corinth, that gave birth unto that division, whereof the apostle complains, 1 Cor. i.? What was it but the defections of the church of Rome, that has made such a wide breach between Protestants and Papists? It is true, every part and set of men have preached up peace, and cried out against division; as the Papists, to this very day, exclaim against us for making a rupture in the church of Christ: whereas it is not we, but they themselves, that made the rupture by their defections. We must not say, *A confederacy* with any in a way of sin, or purchase peace at the expence of truth and holiness. This was the sentiment of good old Jacob on his death-bed, Gen. xlix. 5. 'Simeon and Levi are brethren in iniquity: instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret,' &c. Many other things might be added as concomitants of defection; but I must not stand on them. I go on therefore unto

II. The *second* thing in the text and method, which

which was, to *inquire a little into the causes of defection.* And,

1. The main cause, or rather occasion, of this defection here mentioned, was the unpleasantness of Christ's doctrine unto the sensual and carnal inclinations of these pretended disciples mentioned in our text. His doctrine did not suit their humours, and answer their expectations; therefore they 'went back, and walked no more with him.' Just like many among themselves, who, if ministers do not preach according to their fancies, if they be free and faithful, and preach against the defection whereof they are guilty, they either turn their backs on them, or cry out upon them, as men of turbulent spirits, incendiaries, firebrands, and what not. But ministers need not be discouraged on this account, since the apostles of our Lord were characterised after the same manner: 'These are they that have turned the world upside down.' I fear there are many among us, who, if they would speak the language of their hearts, would join issue with that people, Is. xxx. 10. 'Who said to their seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.' But, Sirs, we need not wonder to see folk stumbling at the plain truths of the word, seeing Christ himself is set for the fall, as well as for the rising of many in Israel.

2. The love of worldly riches is another great cause of defection, as is plain from that of the apostle, 1. Tim. vi. 10. 'The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.' Where the love of

the world has the ascendant in the heart, the love of God cannot be strong; for 'if a man love the world, 'the love of the Father is not in him:' and where the love of God is not, it is impossible for that man to stand his ground.

3. The love of worldly ease is another great cause of defection from Christ, especially in a time of persecution for the gospel's sake; for then it will be said, as Peter unto Christ, when dissuading him from going up to Jerusalem, 'Master, spare thyself,' it is best to sleep in a whole skin. But let us remember what Christ says in this case, Matth. xvi. 25. 'whosoever 'will save his life, shall lose it: and whosoever shall 'lose his life for my sake, shall find it.'

4. The fear of man is another cause of defection: 'Fear of man,' says Solomon, 'bringeth a snare;' especially the fear of offending and displeasing great men, upon whom we have any kind of dependence. But, as an antidote against this, let us compare the wrath of man with the wrath of the eternal God. Shall we adventure to run upon the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler, to invite the displeasure of a worm like ourselves? Is. li. 12. 'Who art thou, that thou 'shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the 'son of man which shall be made as grass? and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth 'the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?' To the same purpose is that caveat given us by our blessed Lord, 'Fear not man that can kill the body, 'but cannot kill the soul,' &c.

5. Bad example has a fatal influence this way; and especially the bad example of men of influence and authority, such as ministers and magistrates. Ye
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have a word for this, Hof. v. 1. 'Hear ye this, O priests, and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor.' When we have conceived a great veneration for any man, we are very ready to run after his example. Thus, Gal. ii 13. Barnabas, with many of the converted Jews at Antioch, were led away with Peter's dissimulation, who seemed unto them a pillar; for which Paul withstood him to the very face. Let us always remember, that we are to be followers of no man, but in so far as they are followers of Christ.

6. The treachery and deceit of the heart, with its natural bent and bias towards sin: 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' That character given Israel is exceedingly applicable unto it, Hof. xi. 7. 'They are bent to backsliding.' There is not only an easiness and ductility in the heart of man to sin, but a strong propensity and inclination. So that it was not without sufficient ground that Solomon tells us, Prov xxviii. 26. 'He that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool.' Let us therefore advert unto that caveat of the apostle's, Heb. iii. 12. 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.' I might mention many other causes, if time would allow, such as absolute and downright hypocrisy in their management with God. If the heart be not *right with God*, people can never be *stedfast in his covenant*. Again, self-confidence, when men lean to their own understanding, trust to their own strength; like Peter, 'Though all men forsake thee, yet will

‘not I.’ These resolutions that are founded upon our own strength, will prove like Jonah’s gourd, wither and come to nought, as soon as ever the wind of temptation blows on them. We are not to trust any created grace that is in us, but only the grace that is in Christ Jesus; ‘Be strong in the Lord, and ‘in the power of his might.’ Again, when folk voluntarily disband their guard, and slack their watch, they yield themselves an easy prey to the devil: and therefore, ‘Be sober, be vigilant; for your adversary ‘the devil goes about, as a roaring lion, seeking ‘whom he may devour.’ Again, when folk do not lay a sure foundation. He that builds, must count the cost. They that have not a root of solid grace in themselves, they will fall away in the time of temptation. And so much for the causes of defection, the second thing proposed.

III. The *third* thing was, ‘to enquire a little in- ‘to the seasons of defection.’ The words also give ground for this inquiry: ‘From that time many of his ‘disciples went back. Ye may take these few, among many others.

1. Defections may happen after God has been making very signal and remarkable appearances in his providence for a people. Christ, in the beginning of this chapter, had made a signal, yea, a miraculous appearance for those people, by feeding them in a desert place; and yet a day or two after, they ‘went ‘back, and walked no more with him.’ This was the sin of Israel. God delivers them out of Egyptian bondage, in a wonderful way, plaguing their enemies
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and dividing the Red sea before them ; and yet they soon forgot his mighty works, and turned aside from the right way. And, alas ! may not this aggravate the defections whereof we in this land are guilty, that we have turned aside from God, after many surprising and almost miraculous deliverances that he has wrought for us ?

2. Defections frequently happen in the midst of the clearest revelation of the gospel, and when the light of the gospel is shining with the greatest brightness among a people. This people here, they had heard Christ himself preach, who spake as never man spake ; and yet, immediately upon the back of hearing him, they turned their back upon him. This also aggravates our defections, and abounding sins, that they are under the clearest sun-shine of gospel-revelation : ‘ If I had not come and spoken unto them ‘ they had not had sin ; but now they have no cloak ‘ for their sin.’

3. After very solemn professions of love and friendship unto Christ. This people here, they professed such a kindness unto Christ, that they would needs make him a king ; and they are so taken with him, that they follow him to the other side of the sea : and yet, alas ! they ‘ went back, and walked no more with him. ~ Thus Israel also, they seemingly professed that whatever the Lord their God should command them, that they would observe and do ; but they quickly ‘ turned aside like a deceitful bow.’ My friends, ye have been professing friendship to Christ before men and angels, by partaking of the symbols of his body and blood : O take care that ye be not found

practically renouncing your sacramental engagements, by entering upon a course of defection. Alas! may not the defections of many professors be dated from a communion-table? they come away, after they have got the sop, with more of hell and the devil in them than before.

4. After some remarkable common illumination, and seeming experiences in religion, Heb. vi. &c It was an high aggravation of Solomon's sin, that he went astray after the Lord had several times appeared to him.

5. The time of worldly prosperity; Deut. xxxii. 15. 'Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked.' And Hos. xiii. 6. 'According to their pasture, so were they filled: they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me.'

6. A time of trial and persecution for righteousness sake, when enemies are invading the rights and privileges of the church of Christ, casting fire into his sanctuary, and polluting the dwelling-place of his name. This is a season wherein the Lord calls for a special testimony for him at the hand of professors; and yet even then many do fall off, and sail with the stream. The stony-ground hearers, when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they are offended. Rotten fruit usually drops off in a storm; and the wind commonly drives away the chaff.

7. Defection may happen among a people, even when there is a remnant keeping their ground, and maintaining their integrity; as ye see here. When the multitude are turning their back on Christ, he
says

says to his disciples, 'Will ye also go away?' Unto which they answered, 'Lord, to whom shall we go 'but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life.' Rev. iii. 4. 'thou hast a few names even in Sardis, 'which have not defiled their garments, &c.'

IV. The *fourth* thing is, to *inquire who they are that make this defection from Christ*. We are told here, that they were disciples, that is, they were so profess- edly. They pretended to be disciples, and had gone considerable lengths with Christ, which had procured this character unto them. For,

1. They had entered into Christ's school, and got many a sweet lesson; but, *hearing many things, they did not observe them*.

2. They were disciples, for they owned him as their Master and Lord: vers. 25. 'When they had found 'him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, 'Rabbi, when camest thou hither?' and, vers. 34. 'Lord, evermore give us this bread.' Of the same kind are these, Matth. vii 22. who cried, 'Lord 'Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? &c.

3. They were a set of men that had a very fiery edge upon them for a while; for they not only fol- lowed Christ through the sea, but they have seeming- ly very strong desires after Christ, and the bread of life: *Lord, say they, 'evermore give us this bread.'* But though with their mouth they pretend much love, yet their heart went after their covetousness.

4. They are called disciples, for they joined them- selves unto the society of the true and real disciples of Christ, and go along with them, in following for a considerable

considerable time ; but yet turn their backs on them at length.

5. They had been eye and ear witnesses of the doctrine and miracles of Christ ; and yet for all this they ' went back, and walked no more with him.' Thus ye see upon what account they might be called disciples.

And now, seeing in the text we are told that they were many, hence therefore ye may take the following observations or remarks.

1. That, among the multitude of professors, Christ has commonly but a thin backing in a winnowing and sifting time : there was but a handful that staid with Christ ; the great multitude dropt off. The heap of corn is but small, when the straw and chaff are separated from it. Christ's flock is but a little flock : ' Many ' are called, but few are chosen. Strait is the gate, ' and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and ' few there be that find it.

2. As Christ has but a thin backing, so the greatest number of professors usually dance to the devil's pipe, and comply with the side of the times. Many of them went back, only the twelve staid behind : Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

3. Defection from Christ is of a very spreading and contagious nature ; a little of this leaven is fair to leaven the whole lump ; like a pestilential air, it flies over a whole country or kingdom in a very little time. Among the many thousands in Israel, only seven thousand had not bowed unto Baal. There
were

were but 'a few names in Sardis, which had not 'defiled their garments.' Hence it follows,

4. That the way of the multitude is always to be suspected. And people are never to think themselves safe enough, because they have many neighbours: for we are not to follow a multitude to evil, in regard the way of the multitude is a way commonly lothed of God.

5. The followers of Christ need not be discouraged because of the paucity of their number; for it has been so in all ages. It was so at first, and will be so to the end of the world: 'When the Son of man 'cometh, shall he find faith in the earth?' And therefore, I say, though ye should sit like a pelican in the wilderness, and owl in the desert; though ye should become the song of the drunkard, and be held for signs and wonders in Israel, because of the singularity of your way: yet be not discouraged at this; for it is far better to go to heaven alone, than to hell in company.

Now, if it be asked, Why the Lord suffereth defections among his professed disciples? I answer briefly,
 1. Because God will have a difference put between the precious and the vile: 1. Cor. xi. 19. 'There 'must needs be heresies among you, that they which 'are approved, may be made manifest.' God will have the chaff distinguished from the wheat, the dross from the true gold; he will have his Israel proved and tried, that they may be distinguished from others.
 2. That real disciples may be excited to cleave to the Lord with the more firmness and resolution: 'Lord, to whom shall we go, but unto thee? said the twelve,

twelve, when they saw the multitude running away. We have a word to this purpose, Job xvii. 8. 9. 'The innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite;' and then it immediately follows, 'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath hands shall add strength,' as in the Hebrew, or, 'be strong and stronger;' intimating thus much, that the defections of hypocrites from the way of the Lord sharpens the resolution of the truly godly in cleaving thereunto; for at such a time God, as it were, is issuing his proclamation in the camp of Israel, 'Who is on the Lord's side?' Unto which we may add, that these defections of pretended disciples do, in a way of righteous judgment, prove stumbling blocks to others, whereby they are hardened in a way of sin. And thus a wo falls both upon the offender, and the offended; according to that of Christ's, Matth. xviii. 7. 'Wo unto the world because of offences: for it must needs be that offences come; but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh.'

V. 'The *fifth* thing is, to 'give a few characters of those who fall off finally, and walk no more with Christ' Only, before I go on, I would permit, that I don't here offer to give positive marks of an irrecoverable condition: for who can set bounds to the infinite grace and mercy of him, to whom no case is desperate, and who is able to save to the uttermost of sin, and to the uttermost of misery? But all I do is, to offer some melancholy symptoms or presumptions of an irrecoverable defection.

1. It is a shrewd evidence of a final defection, when people fall off from the profession and practice
of

of religion, after some signal, though common, illuminations and irradiations of the Spirit; for which ye may read, Heb. vi. 4. 5. 6.

2. When people, through the influence of these common illuminations in the knowledge of Christ, have been led to make considerable advances in the way of religion, and yet afterward apostatise, and fall back into the same puddle of wickedness which they seemed to have escaped. A pregnant scripture for this ye have, 2. Pet. ii. 20. 21.

3. When people knowingly and wilfully venture upon a way of sin, after they have received the knowledge of the truth; for which see Heb. x. 26. 27. When folk come that length, especially after a profession of religion, as to become mockers of true piety, attempting to ridicule things sacred, and to banter those out of their religion, whom they think to be aiming heaven-ward; this is a black mark of one that is entirely given up of God, this being an open proclamation of war against heaven. 'Be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.'

4. Those whose hearts are filled with malice against the image of God in his people, who nauseate and detest the very picture of holiness in his people, and so become open persecutors of Christ in his members, and take all methods imaginable to extirpate the name of Christ and Christianity out of the world; as did the cursed apostate Julian.

5. When people get success and prosperity in a way of sin. They thirst after sin, and God grants them the desire of their hearts. This is a sign of total and final defection; for, says the Lord, 'backsliders in heart'

‘heart shall be filled with their own ways.’ Perhaps, Sirs, you think all is right, because God in his providence does not check you in your sinful ways. But assure yourselves, there cannot be a sadder mark of his wrath and vengeance; for then he seems to be saying, ‘They are joined to their idols, let them alone: Let him that is filthy, be filthy still.’

6. When, after challenges of conscience, rebukes from the word and Spirit upon the account of sin, all comes to be hushed up in a profound silence, and the senses of the soul are locked up in a deep slumber: then it would appear, that God is saying, as he said to the old world, ‘My Spirit shall no more strive with them.’ They ‘would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust: and they walked in their own counsels. I would have purged them, and they were not purged; therefore they shall not be purged from their filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon them.’ We have a sad instance of this nature, Is. vi. 10. There is a people on whom God hath taken a great deal of pains, as we read, chap. v. He had chosen them as his vineyard, planted them in a fruitful soil: but all his labour was lost, they still went on in a course of defection and apostasy; instead of grapes, they brought forth wild grapes. Well, at length God seals them up under a stroke of judicial blindness and hardness, so that no reproof from word, providence, or conscience, should ever dare upon them. ‘Go,’ says the Lord, ‘and make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes,

‘ eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with
 ‘ their heart, and convert and be healed.’

Before I proceed to the application, I shall obviate a question which some serious soul may be ready to move, upon what has been said on the former head, *viz.* Wherein lies the difference between the partial and temporary defections of the godly, and these total, final, and irrecoverable apostasies of hypocrites, and temporary believers?

Unto which I answer, 1. The believer, when he is left to backslide, or to fall into any sin, he howls and groans under it; it lies heavy on him, like ‘ a burden too heavy for him to bear. Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me.’ They can never enjoy themselves with satisfaction, till they be recovered again. An instance of this we have in the apostle Peter, after he had been left to make that foul step of defection, in denying Christ, with curses and imprecations; after Christ gave him but a look, he went out, and wept bitterly. The same we see in David, Psal. li. After he had been guilty of murder and adultery, in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba; how doth he lament and bewail his folly? And that which principally touches them, is not so much the penal, as the moral evil of their defection; they are not so much grieved, that they themselves suffer, as that God is dishonoured, and religion wounded by their means; as we see in David, vers. 4. ‘ Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.’

2. They are never at rest or ease, till they have the guilt

guilt and filth of their sin expiate and washed away by the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus; and all the world will not quiet their consciences, till this be obtained. O, says David, after he had made this foul step, 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin;' and again, vers. 7. 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.' Whereas the hypocrite, when he falls, he satisfies the clamours of his conscience, either by extenuating his sin, or by multiplying his duties: 'Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?' but he never runs to Christ, to have his conscience sprinkled from dead works.

3. The believer, after he has fallen, he doth not satisfy himself with a turning from sin unto God, but he must have some reviving intimations of God's favour and reconciled countenance; as David, vers. 8. 'Make me to hear joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.' Though all the world should fawn upon him, yet it will not please him, unless he get a smile from God himself.

4. The believer, when he falls, his fall leads him to bewail the corruption and depravation of his nature. He traces the streams to the fountain, and sits down there, and weeps over it, as the cause of all his defections and backslidings from God; as David did, vers. 5. 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me:' and looks up to God for a cast of renewing grace, vers. 10. 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Whereas hypocrites, they bewail the
loss

loss of their reputation more than they do their sin, or the depravation of their nature.

5. When believers fall, they come under fresh engagements, through grace, to walk more closely with God than ever they have done before, and endeavour to be more serviceable to him in their generation than ever; as David, vers. 12. 13. 'Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation:—then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.'

6. As burnt bairns dread the fire, they are afraid of falling into the same sins again; and for this end indent with God, not in their own, but only in his strength, to keep them: as David, 'Uphold me with thy free spirit;' and again elsewhere, 'Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps may not slide;' and, Psal. cxix. 5. 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' Now, from these marks of the partial falls of the godly, ye may easily gather the difference between them, and the damnable apostasy, and total desertion of hypocrites and reprobates.

And now I go on to the application of this doctrine; and all the use I make of it, shall be in a word of *exhortation*. Is it so, that many of Christ's pretended disciples do, some time or other, fall totally and finally away from him? Then let me exhort and persuade all hearing me, but especially you who have been lifting up your hands to him at a communion-table, and professing to be his disciples, by laying your hands on a slain Redeemer, to endeavour firmness and stability, in cleaving to Christ and his way. O let it
not

not be said of you, as it is said of these disciples here,
 ‘ From that time they went back, and walked no more
 ‘ with him.’

To inforce this exhortation, consider, *first*, The evil
 of apostasy, either in part, or in whole.

1. It is a provocation of the highest nature. And
 there are especially two evils in it, which cannot but
 awaken divine resentment, *viz.* treachery and ingrati-
 tude. *1st*, There is treachery in it. What husband
 would take it well, if his wife should abandon him,
 and follow after other lovers? My friends, you have
 been taking God for your husband, in a solemn man-
 ner, before angels and men; and will it not be trea-
 chery in the highest degree, to go and prostitute your
 souls unto sin, his greatest enemy? Will not this cast
 a calumny and reproach upon God, as if others were
 better than he? This will make him say, ‘ What i-
 ‘ niquity have your fathers found in me?’ &c. ‘ O
 ‘ my people, what have I done unto thee, and where-
 ‘ in have I wearied thee?’ *2dly*, There is ingrati-
 tude in it also. It was a very cutting word that Christ
 had to his disciples, in the verse following our text,
 ‘ Will ye also leave me?’ The same is he saying to e-
 very one of you, ‘ Will ye also go away,’ after such
 proofs of my kindness, after such repeated vows and
 obligations? From all which it is evident, that apo-
 stasy is a provocation of the highest nature.

2. Your backsliding will give a deep wound to re-
 ligion, and bring up a reproach upon the good ways
 of God. You have been owning him as your Lord
 and Master, and declaring before the world, that you
 think his service the best service, his wages the best
 wages; that one day in his courts is better than a
 thousand.

thousand. Now, if after all you backslide, will not the world conclude, that you have not found that in his service which you expected? And thus others will be scared from the good ways of the Lord.

3. You will grieve the hearts of the godly, whose hearts God would not grieve. And it is a dangerous thing to offend one of his little ones: 'It were better
' for you that a millstone were hanged about your neck,
' and you cast into the midst of the sea, than that you
' should offend one of these little ones.'

4. If ye shall apostatise in whole, and slide back with a perpetual backsliding, it will be a prelude of your eternal banishment and separation from the presence of God. God's soul takes no pleasure in backsliders, and therefore they can never have access into his gracious presence, consequently shall be punished with everlasting destruction.

5. If ye be believers, and apostatise in part, ye shall put a whip in God's hand to chastise you. If ye shall, after this, turn careless in your walk, more remiss in duty, less frequent, less fervent, less lively than before, ye may assure yourselves, that ye shall not go unpunished: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for
' your iniquities. If his children forsake my law, and
' keep not my commandments: then will I visit their
' transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with
' stripes.'

Secondly, Consider some great advantages of stability in cleaving to Christ, and standing firm to his cause and interest.

1. It will furnish you much inward peace and tranquillity of mind: 'Great peace have all they which
' love

‘love thy law.’ God tells Israel, that if they had cleaved unto him and his way, ‘their peace should have been as a river, and their righteousness as the waves of the sea.’

2. It will glorify God, and reflect a lustre upon religion; make the world conclude ye serve a good master. Hence is that of Christ, ‘Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’

3. As backsliding strikes a damp upon the spirit at the approaches of death; so stability of heart in the Lord’s way, affords courage and confidence, through Christ, upon the approach of that grim messenger of the Lord of hosts. Hence is that of Paul, ‘I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,’ &c.

4. The reward of grace is insured in Christ to the stedfast soul: 1 Cor. xv. 58. ‘Be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.’ Remember that your title to the reward comes in by virtue of your union with Christ: and O how glorious is that reward the stedfast soul is intitled to through him! It has a kingdom secured to it: ‘Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.’ A throne: Rev. iii. 21. ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne.’ A crown is secured. A crown of life: ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’ A crown of glory: ‘When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.’

A crown of righteousness, which is 'laid up for all that keep the faith, and love his appearing.' A crown of joy, yea, a crown of everlasting joy, shall be 'upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall fly away.'

I conclude with two or three advices.

1. Take care that the foundation be well laid, upon the everlasting rock Jesus Christ; for this is the *foundation* that God hath 'laid in Zion,' and 'another foundation can no man lay.' Ye must be cemented to this foundation by the Spirit and faith, otherwise ye can never stand in a day of trial; for your *root* being *rottenness*, your *blossom shall go up as the dust*. The house built upon the sand fell, when the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon it; but the house founded upon this rock shall stand out against the utmost efforts of the gates of hell.

2. Maintain an everlasting jealousy over your own hearts; for 'he that trusteth in his own heart, is a fool,' considering that it is 'deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.' Particularly take heed of the workings and sproutings of the bitter root of unbelief, which causes to depart from the living God, Heb. iii. 12.

3. Keep your eyes upon the promises of persevering grace, particularly that, Jer. xxxii. 40. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.' If you plead and improve this promise by faith, it is impossible ye can draw back; for it is 'impossible for God to lie.' God, he stands on both sides of the covenant, to fulfil both his and our

part of the same; and therefore plead, that he may fulfil his in you, that he would keep you by his power through faith unto salvation.

4. Keep a steady eye on Christ, the blessed Mediator of the covenant. Eye him as the store-house and fountain of all your supplies of grace and strength; for it is 'out of his fulness that we receive, and grace for grace.' Eye him as your Captain, to fight all your battles against sin and Satan; for he has 'spoiled principalities and powers;' and if ever we overcome, it must be in the blood and strength of the Lamb. Eye him as your guide, to lead you through all the dark and difficult steps of your pilgrimage; for 'he leads the blind in a way that they have not known.' Eye him as your pattern; endeavour to imitate him in all his imitable perfections; run your Christian race, 'looking unto Jesus.' Remember how steady and firm he was in carrying on the great work of redemption; he 'set his face like a flint' against all the storms and obstacles that lay in his way; he did not *faint*, nor was he *discouraged*, but 'travelled on in the greatness of his strength, enduring the cross, and despising the shame;' for he said on the cross, 'It is finished.' So study ye, after his example, to run your Christian race, your course of obedience, and press on against all temptations and difficulties, till ye have finished your course with joy, and arrive at the mark and prize of the high calling of God in Christ.

5. Be aware of the first beginnings of defection and backsliding; for one trip makes way for another. Defections, they are like the rolling of a stone upon the brow of an high mountain; if once it begin to roll, it is fair never to rest till it be at the bottom. Ye have been

been upon the mount of God, Sirs, and if ye begin once to roll down the hill of your high professions and resolutions, it is an hundred to one if ye do not land in the depths of apostasy, and at last in the depths of hell.

6. *Lastly*, Study to be well skilled in unmasking the mystery of iniquity, and in detecting the wiles and stratagems of the tempter, and to provide yourselves with suitable antidotes against every attack of the enemy. For instance, if he tell thee sin is pleasant, ask him, if the gripings of the worm of conscience be pleasant too? and if one day in God's house be not better than a thousand in the tents of sin? If he tell thee, that no body sees, ask him, if he can shut the eye of an omniscient God, 'whose eyes are as a flame of fire,' and who 'setteth our most secret sins in the light of his countenance?' If he tell thee it is but a little one, ask him, if there be a little God? or if his displeasure be a little thing? If he tell thee, that sin is profitable, ask him, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' By considerations of this nature, the mind comes to be fortified against the attacks and onsets of that grand enemy of salvation, and prove a notable ballast to keep the soul firm and steady against the most violent storms and tempests that may blow, either from earth or hell.

The wind of the Holy Ghost blowing upon the
dry bones in the valley of vision.

A

SERMON preached in the Tolbooth-church, Edinburgh, upon a fast-day before the sacrament of our LORD's supper, March 15. 1715.

EZEK. xxxvii. 9.

*Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon
these slain, that they may live.*

IN the beginning of this chapter, the Lord, in a vision, brings the prophet Ezekiel into a valley full of dead men's bones, quite dried and withered, and asks him the question, If he thought it possible for these dry bones to live? thereby intimating, that although it was a thing impossible with men, yet it was easily effected by the almighty power of God. And to convince him of it, he commands the prophet to speak unto the dry bones, and to tell them, in his name, that he would make the breath of life to enter into them; which accordingly is done: for the prophet having, in the name of the Lord, called upon the four winds to breathe upon the dry bones, immediately life enters into them, and they come together bone to his bone, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, and became an exceeding great army.

By which vision we have a lively representation of a threefold resurrection, (as a late commentator, Mr. Henry,

Henry, very well observes). 1. Of the resurrection of the body at the last day, and general resurrection, when God will command the earth to give up its dead, and the sea to give up its dead; and when, by the ministry of angels, the dust and bones of the saints shall be gathered from the four winds of heaven, to which they have been scattered. Or, 2. We have in this vision a lively representation of the resurrection of the soul from the grave of sin; which is effected by preaching or prophesying, as the instrumental, and by the powerful influence of the Spirit of the Lord, as the principal efficient cause of it: and the wind here spoken of, is plainly said to be understood of the Spirit, vers. 14. "I will put my spirit in you, and ye shall live." Or, 3. We have, by this vision, a representation of the resurrection of the church of God from the grave of her bondage and captivity in Babylon, under which they were at present detained. And this indeed is the primary and immediate scope of the vision, as is plain from the explication that follows it, vers. 11. 12. 13. 14. However, seeing the deliverance of the children of Israel out of their Babylonish captivity, was typical of our spiritual redemption purchased by the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross, and in a day of power applied by the mighty and powerful operation of the Holy Spirit of God; and seeing it is this redemption that we under the gospel are principally concerned with; therefore I shall handle the words that I have read under this spiritual sense and meaning.

And in them briefly we have, 1. A dismal case supposed, and that is spiritual deadness. The people of God they were not only in bondage under their ene-

mies, but likewise their souls were at this time in a languishing condition. But of this more afterwards.

2. We have a blessed remedy here expressed, and that is the breathings of the Spirit of the Lord, the influences of the Holy Ghost: 'Come from the four winds, O breath,' &c. Now, these influences of the Holy Ghost are here described,

1st, From their nature, held out under the notion and metaphor of wind: 'Come from the four winds, O breath.' There are three elements by which the operations of the Spirit are held out to us in scripture. Sometimes they are compared unto *fire*: Matth. iii. 11. 'He shall baptize you' (speaking of Christ) 'with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.' Sometimes they are compared unto *water*: Is. xlv. 3. 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy feed,' &c. Sometimes the influences of the Spirit are held forth under the metaphor of *wind*, as in Cant. iv. 16. 'Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden.' So here, by the wind, or breath here spoken of, we are principally to understand the Spirit: it is plainly declared to be the Spirit of God in the 14th verse of this chapter. I cannot stand to shew you the grounds of this metaphor. Wind, you know, is of a cleansing, cooling, fructifying nature and virtue, acts freely and irresistibly. It is not in the power of man to resist or oppose the blowings of the winds. So the influences of the Spirit they cleanse and purify the heart: they allay the storms of conscience, make the bones which were broken to rejoice; they make the soul to grow as the lily, and to cast forth its roots like Lebanon; they render the soul fruitful

fruitful like the garden of God; and the Spirit acts with a sovereign freedom, and irresistible efficacy, as ye may hear afterwards. But,

2dly, These influences of the Holy Ghost, they are described from their variety, 'four winds: Come 'from the four winds, O breath:' importing the manifold influences and operations of this one and eternal Spirit. Hence we read of the 'north and south 'wind,' Cant. iv. 16. and of 'the seven Spirits that 'are before the throne of God,' Rev. iv. 5.

3dly, These influences are described from their acting or operation, which is here called a *breathing*: 'Breathe upon these slain.' By the acting of this almighty wind, our natural life was produced and formed, Gen. ii. 7. We are there told, that after God had 'formed man of the dust of the ground, he 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and he 'became a living soul.' Hence is that of Elihu, Job xxxiii. 4. 'The spirit of God hath made me, and the 'breath of the Almighty hath given me life.' And it is by the influences of the same almighty breath, that our souls are quickened, when dead in trespasses and sins, and our spiritual life is formed within us. But then,

4thly, These influences are described from the end and effect of their operation: 'Breathe upon these 'slain, that they may live;' that is, that the dry bones may become living souls, that out of these stones children may be raised up to Abraham.

Now, from these words thus briefly explained, I only offer you this one observation, namely,

DOCT. *That as the generality of a church and people*

ple in covenant with God may be in a very dead and languishing condition as to their souls: so the breathings and influences of the Holy Spirit of God are absolutely necessary for their revival. This is the sum of what I intend from these words, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.'

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall,

I. Speak a little unto this deadness which is incident unto a people externally in covenant with God.

II. Unto the influences or breathings of the wind of the Holy Ghost, which are so absolutely necessary in order to their revival.

III. Touch at that life which is effected by these breathings.

IV. I shall apply.

I. I say, I would *speake a little unto this deadness which is incident unto a people externally in covenant with God.* And here I shall only, 1. Give you some of its kinds. 2. Some of the causes of it. 3. Some of the symptoms of it.

1. The *first* thing is, to give you some kinds of deadness. Know then in general, that there is a two-fold death, one is proper and natural, the other is improper and metaphorical.

1. *Death*, properly so called, is a thing so well known, that it is needless for me to tell you what it is. There is none of us all but we shall know it experimentally within a little; for 'it is appointed for every man once to die.' The grave it is a house appointed for all living; and therefore, with Job, we
may

may say 'to corruption, Thou art our father: and to 'the worm, Thou art our mother and sister.' But this is not the death I now speak of; and therefore,

2. There is a death which is improper or metaphorical; which is nothing else but a disease or distemper of the soul, whereby it is rendered unmeet and incapable for holy and spiritual exercises. And this again is twofold, either total or partial.

1st, There is a total death incident unto the wicked and ungodly, who are stark dead, and have nothing of spiritual life in them at all. Hence, Eph. ii. 1. men in a state of nature are said to be 'dead in trespasses and sins;' that is, under the total reigning power of sin, 'in the gall of bitterness, and under 'the bond of iniquity; without God, without Christ,' and therefore 'without hope.'

2^{dly}, There is a partial death incident to believers, whom God hath raised out of the grave of an unrenewed state, and in whose souls he hath implanted a principle of spiritual life. And this partial death, incident to believers, consists in a manifest decay of spiritual principles and habits, in the abating of their wonted life and vigour, and activity in the way and work of the Lord: their faith, their love, their hope, and other graces, are all in a fainting and languishing condition; they lie dormant in the soul, like the life of the tree that lies hid in its root, without fruit or blossoms, during the winter-season. Such deadness as this we find the Lord's people in scripture frequently complaining of, particularly Is. lvi. 3. 'The son of the 'stranger, that hath joined himself to the Lord, and 'taken hold of his covenant,' he is made to 'speak, 'saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from his

‘ people:’ and the eunuch cries out, ‘ I am a dry tree,’ wherein there is no life or sap. It is this kind of spiritual deadness, incident to believers, that I now principally speak of. The leaves of his profession may in a great measure be withered; the candle of his conversation may burn dimly, or with a very imperfect light; the flame of his affections, his zeal, love, desire, may, like that of a great fire, be reduced into a few coals and cinders. There may be a great intermission or formality in the discharge of commanded duty. The mind which once, with delight and admiration, could meditate upon God, and Christ, and the covenant, and things that are above, may come to lose its relish of these things, and to dote upon the transitory fading vanities of a present world. The common gifts of the Spirit, through carnal ease, and defect of employment, may be in a great measure blasted: and, which is worst of all, the saving graces and fruits of the Spirit may come to be woefully impaired as to their former degrees and actings. But now, this partial death of believers, again, it is twofold: there is a deadness which is felt by God’s people, and a deadness which is not felt; ‘ grey hairs ‘ are here and there upon them,’ sometimes, ‘ and ‘ they do not behold them.’ The Lord was departed from Samson, ‘ and he wist not,’ Judg. xvi. 20. But then there is a deadness which is felt, when God’s people have a sense of their deadness, and are lamenting it. And it is an evidence of spiritual life, or of some revival, when the Lord’s people are beginning to cry out with the church, Psal. lxxxv. 6. ‘ Wilt thou ‘ not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in ‘ thee?

thee? Why hast thou hardened our heart from thy
'fear?' Is. lxiii. 17. But,

2. The *second* thing is, to take notice of the causes
of this spiritual deadness. I shall only name them,
because your time would not allow me to enlarge.

1. then, Abstinence, or neglect of food, you know,
will soon bring the body into a pining, languishing
condition: so, if the means of grace be not diligent-
ly improv'd, if we neglect, by faith, to apprehend
and to improve Christ, and to feed upon him, whose
'flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink in-
'deed,' the spiritual life of the soul will soon languish
and wither. Hence is that of Christ, John vi. 53.
'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink
'his blood, ye have no life in you.'

2. Surfeiting the soul with sensual pleasure is ano-
ther great cause of spiritual death: Hos. iv. 11:
'Whoredom, and wine, and new wine take away
'the heart:' they suck out the very life of the soul.
What is the reason why many professors of religion
have lost their wonted vigour in the way of the Lord,
and are in such a languishing condition as to their
soul-matters? The plain reason of it is this, they are
glutting themselves with the pleasures of sense. If
Samson do but sleep in Delilah's lap, she will betray
him into the hand of the Philistines, and cut the locks
wherein his strength lies; and when he goes out to
shake himself as at other times, he will find his
strength gone away from him.

3. Inactivity and sloth in salvation and generation-
work is another cause of spiritual deadness. Physicians
observe, that as too violent exercise, so too much rest,
or a sedentary way of living is prejudicial to the

health of the body. This holds also in spirituals: if we do not exercise ourselves unto godliness, and endeavour to abound in the work of the Lord, the spiritual life will soon languish and dwindle away. And therefore, 'Let us not be slothful in business, but 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; and whatever 'our hand findeth to do, let us do it with all our 'might.' And beware of resting upon empty wishes and desires in spiritual matters; for 'the desire of the 'slothful kills him, because his hands refuse to labour.'

4. The contagion of ill example, of a carnal world, and irreligious relations, has a fatal influence this way. Ye know it is exceeding dangerous for those who have the seed of all diseases in them, to frequent the company of those who are infected with the plague or pestilence. A Joseph, if he stay long in the Egyptian court, will learn to swear by the life of Pharaoh. It is true indeed, as fire sometimes burns with the greater vehemence, and casts the greater heat the colder the air be; so the zeal and life of God's people is sometimes rather quickened, by beholding the wickedness of those among whom their lot is cast, as Paul among the Athenians. But if we shall adventure to cast ourselves into the society of the wicked, without a special call and warrant from Providence, it will be next to an impossibility to keep ourselves free of the contagion: for 'can a man carry 'fire in his bosom, and his cloaths not be burnt? 'Can a man walk upon hot coals, and his feet not 'be burnt? Evil communications corrupt good manners.'

5. Some deadly wound in the soul, not carefully noticed,

noticed, may be the cause of spiritual death. You know a man may die not only by a draught of poison, or the like, but also by the cut of a sword. While we are in the wilderness, we live in the very midst of our spiritual enemies: the fiery darts of Satan are flying thick about us; he is ay seeking to bruise the believer's heel, going about seeking to devour: and not only so, but our own lusts also do war against the soul, so that we cannot miss to be wounded thereby. And if the filth and guilt of these wounds be not carefully washed away by the blood and Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, they cannot miss exceedingly to impair the spiritual life and health: therefore David, after he had been wounded by murder and adultery, is so earnest that God would wash and cleanse his wounds, and purge him with hyssop, that so the joy of his salvation might be restored. But then,

6. A holy God has sometimes a righteous and holy hand in this spiritual death, that the Lord's people are liable unto, by withdrawing and suspending the influences of his Spirit from them. For as the plant and herb of the field withers and languishes when the rain of heaven is withheld; so when the influences of the Holy Ghost are suspended, the very sap of the soul, and its spiritual life goes away. And the Lord with-holds the influences of his Spirit for many reasons. As,

1st, He does it sometimes in a way of awful and adorable sovereignty, to shew that he is not a debtor unto any of his creatures. However, because the Spirit's influences are seldom withdrawn in a way of sovereignty, it is our part to search and try, if conscience do

do not condemn us, as having a sinful and culpable hand in it ourselves.

2dly, Sometimes he does it to humble his people, and to prevent their pride, which makes him to behold them afar off. If we were always under the lively gales and influences of the Spirit, we would be ready to misken ourselves, and in danger, with Paul, of being lifted up above measure, when he was wrapt up into the third heaven. Upon this account some of the saints have said, that they have got more good sometimes by their desertion, than by their enlargement.

3dly, He does it to make them prize Christ, and see their continual need of fresh supplies out of his fulness. He lets our cisterns run dry, that we may come anew, and lay our empty vessels under the flowings of the blessed fountain of life, that 'out of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace.'

4thly, He does it sometimes for the trial of his people, to see if they will follow him in a wilderness, in a land that is not sown, as when he is feeding them with sensible communications of his grace and Spirit; to see if they will live on him by faith, when they cannot live by sight or sense.

5thly, Sometimes he does it for their chastisement, to correct them for their iniquities. And this indeed is the most ordinary cause why the Spirit of the Lord is suspended and withdrawn.

I have not time to enumerate many of these sins which provoke the Lord to withdraw his Spirit. I shall only mention two or three.

(1.) Not hearkening to the motions of his Spirit, is one great reason why the Lord withdraws his Spirit;

as you see in the spouse, Cant. v. There Christ comes, and moves, and calls for entrance: the spouse she does not hearken to the motion: 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' Whereupon he immediately withdraws and leaves her, as ye may read at your own leisure.

(2.) Lukewarmness and formality in the discharge of duty is another cause of it, as we see in the church of Laodicea: it made him to spue that church out of his mouth. And then,

(3.) Prostituting the gifts and graces of the Spirit unto carnal, selfish, and base ends, to procure a name, or make a shew in the world. This is another reason of it.

(4.) Sinning against light, trampling upon the belly of conscience, as David no doubt did in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba; whereby he provoked the Lord so far to leave him, that he cries out, Psal. li. 11. 'Cast me not out of thy sight; and take not thy holy spirit from me.'

(5.) Barrenness and unfruitfulness under the means of grace: Is. v. the clouds are commanded to give no rain upon the barren vineyard. And then,

(6.) and *lastly*, Their not listening carefully to the voice of God in ordinances and providences; this is another cause of it: Psal. lxxxi. 11. 12. 'My people would not hearken to my voice: therefore I gave them up unto their own hearts lust: and they walked in their own counsels.' And thus ye have some of the causes of this spiritual deadness. I come to

3. The *third* thing, which was to give you some of the symptoms of it: and would to God they were not

not too visible, rise, and common in the day, and upon the generation wherein we live. I shall name a few of them to you.

1. Want of appetite after the bread and water of life is a symptom of spiritual death. You know that man cannot be in a healthful condition that lothes his food, or has lost his appetite after it. Alas! is not the manna of heaven, that God is raining about our tent-doors, generally lothed? The great truths of God, which some of the saints have found to be 'sweeter than honey from the honey-comb,' have not that favour and relish with us that they ought to have. Are not sabbaths, sacraments, sermons, fast-days, and feast-days, a burden to many among us; so that if they would but speak out in the language of their hearts, they would be ready to join issue with these, Mal. i. 13. 'What a weariness is this?' Whereas the soul that is in a lively condition is ready to say of the word, 'It is better to me than thousands of gold and silver; I esteem it more than my necessary food:' and of ordinances, 'I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth;' and Psal. lxxxiv. 10. 'One day in thy courts is better than a thousand.'

2. Though a man have something of an appetite, yet if he do not grow, or look like his food, it looks something dangerous and death-like. The thriving Christian is a growing Christian: 'They that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.' But, alas! is it not quite otherwise with the most part? Many are going backward, instead

instead of forward, as it is said of Jerusalem, Lam. i. 8. 'She sigheth, and turneth backward.' May we not cry out of our leanness, notwithstanding of all the fattening means and ordinances that we enjoy?

3. Ye know when death takes a dealing with a person, it makes his beauty to fade: 'When with rebukes thou dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.' Pale death soon alters the ruddy countenance. Perhaps the day has been, O believer, when the beauty of holiness adorned every step of thy conversation; thy light did so shine before men, that they seeing thy good works, could not but glorify thy heavenly Father: but now, alas! the beauty of thy conversation is sullied and stained, by lying among the pots of sin. This says, that spiritual death is dealing with thy soul.

4. Death not only wastes the beauty, but the strength also: Eccl. xii. 3. 'The keepers of the house do tremble, and the strong men do bow,' upon the approaches of the king of terrors. Now, see if your wonted strength and ability to perform duty, or to resist temptations, be not abated. Perhaps the day has been, when thou couldst have said with Paul, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do;' for 'through Christ strengthening me I can do all things?' but now thou art ready to faint and sit up at the very thoughts of duty. The day perhaps has been, when, though Satan, that cunning archer, did shoot sore at thee; yet thy bow did abide in its strength, and the arms of thy hands were made strong by the mighty God of Jacob; thou wast in case to beat back the
fiery

fiery darts of Satan, and to stand thy ground against the corruptions and defections of the day and generation: but now, like a dead fish, thou art carried down the stream. Doth not this proclaim thy soul to be under a sad decay?

5. Death wastes the natural heat and warmth of the body. There is a kind of chilness and coldness that seizes a man when death takes a dealing with him. So it is a sign of a spiritual decay and deadness, when wonted zeal for God and his glory, and the concerns of his church and his kingdom, is abated. Perhaps the day has been, when, with David, the zeal of God's house did in a manner eat you up, and you preferred Jerusalem to your chief joy: but now you are almost come the length of Gallio's temper, to 'care for none of these things;' indifferent whether the work of God in the land sink or swim. Laodicea's distemper is too prevalent among us at this day: we are neither cold nor hot in the things of God; and therefore have reason to fear, lest we be spewed out of God's mouth. The day has been when your spirits were lifted up in prayer, in hearing, in communicating; you were 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;' you could rejoice to work righteousness, and say, in some measure, with David, 'I will go unto the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy:' but now all this holy warmth is gone in a great measure; you are become formal and careless in the concerns of God's glory.

6. A dead man, you know, he cannot move, but only as he is moved from without, in regard he wants a principle of motion within. So it is a sign of spiritual death, even in believers, when external motives

tives and considerations have a greater influence in the duties of religion upon them, than an internal principle of faith and love. When the believer is himself, the love of Christ constrains him in every duty; this is the 'one thing' he desires, 'that he may behold the beauty of the Lord, and inquire in his temple:' but when any selfish or external motive sets him a work, it is a sign of spiritual death. Other things might be added, but I hasten to speak to,

II. The *second* thing proposed in the method, and that was, to *speak a little unto these breathings and influences of the Spirit of God, which are absolutely necessary for the revival of the Lord's people under deadness: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.* And here I would, 1. Clear the nature of these influences, in a word or two. 2. Speak unto the variety of these influences, *four winds.* 3. To the manner of their operation upon the elect; they are said to 'breathe upon the slain.' 4. Speak a little unto the necessity of these breathings. 5. To the several seasons of the Spirit's reviving influences.

I fear your time cut me short before I have done; but I shall run through these particulars as quickly as possible.

1. The *first* thing is, to clear the nature of these breathings or influences. And what I have to offer upon this head, you may take in these few propositions.

1. then, Ye would know, that the influences and gifts of the Spirit of God they are of two sorts, either common or saving. As for the common influences
of

of the Spirit, which are sometimes bestowed upon the wicked and reprobate world, I am not to speak of these at this time. All I shall say about them is, to tell you, that they are given in common to the children of men, 'for edifying of the' (mystical) 'body' 'of Christ,' until it arrive at 'the measure of the' 'stature of the fulness of Christ,' as you read, Eph. iv. And therefore they are commonly called by divines *dona ministrantia*, or *ministring gifts*. Although they have no saving efficacy upon the person in whom they dwell; yet God, in his holy wisdom, makes use of them for the good of his church in general, as we read, Eph. iv. And another thing that I would tell you likewise, concerning these common influences, is, that they are of an exceeding dangerous nature, when they are not accompanied with saving grace. The man that has them, is like a ship having big large sails, and but little or no ballast at all, in the midst of the ocean; and therefore in danger of being split in pieces against every rock. Matth. vii. 22. we read of some who had extraordinary common gifts; they prophesied in Christ's name, wrought miracles, and cast out devils in his name, and did many wonderful works, and yet Christ utterly disowns them. I do not speak of these common influences now, but of such as are saving. And therefore,

2. A second proposition is, that the Holy Spirit of God, considered in his particular œconomy in the work of redemption, as the applier of the Redeemer's purchase, is the author and efficient cause of all saving influences. It is he, I say, that prepares and disposes the soul of man for the entertainment of the things of God, which are not received nor discerned by the
natural

natural mind. It is he that ploughs up the fallow ground, of the heart, and brings in the wilderness, and turns it into a fruitful field. It is he that garnishes the face of the soul with the saving graces of the Spirit: these are flowers of the upper Paradise, therefore called 'the fruit of the Spirit,' Gal. v. 22. It is he that preserves, cherishes, and maintains them by renewed influences: he cherishes the smoking flax, and at last turns it into a lamp of glory in heaven; for 'he brings forth judgment unto victory.'

3. Again, ye would know that the elect of God are the subjects recipient of all saving influences of the Spirit of God: I say, they are only unto the elect of God, and to them only, upon their conversion, when they came to be united unto Christ as members of his mystical body. We must be ingrafted into this true olive, otherwise we can never partake of his sap, and 'receive out of his fulness, grace for grace.' That these influences are peculiar unto the elect of God, is plain from Tit. i. 1. where we read of 'the faith of God's elect'.

4. These influences of the Spirit, they are given for various ends unto the elect of God. The judicious Dr Owen, in his 'Discourses on the Spirit,' observes, That these saving influences are given unto the elect of God for regeneration, unto the regenerate for sanctification, unto the sanctified for consolation, and unto the comforted Christian for further upbuilding, and edification, and establishment, until they arrive at perfection in glory. But the nature of these influences will further appear from,

2. The *second* thing proposed, which was, to speak
a little

a little to the variety of these influences of the Spirit. You see they are diversified here, while they are called 'four winds: Come from the four winds, O 'breath.' The apostle tells us, that 'there are diversities of gifts and operations, but the same Spirit,' 1 Cor. xii. 4. And we read, as I was telling you, of 'seven Spirits that are before the throne, Rev. 1. Here, if time would allow me to enlarge, I might tell you, that the saving influences and breathings of the Spirit, they are either primary, fundamental, and absolutely necessary to salvation; or they are accumulative, additional, necessary only for the believer's comfort and well-being. Some of these influences are antecedent or preparative unto conversion; some of them are regenerating, and others are subsequent and posterior unto regeneration. But I shall not stand upon such nice distinctions. You may take a few of them in the order following.

1. There are the convincing influences of the Spirit: John xvi. 8. 'When he is come, he will convince the world of sin.' This is what I conceive we are to understand by the *north-wind*, Cant. iv. 16. which is commonly boisterous, cold, chill, and nipping. The elect of God by nature lie fast asleep within the sea-mark of God's wrath, upon the very brink of everlasting ruin, crying Peace, peace to themselves: the Spirit of the Lord comes like a stormy north-wind, blows hard upon the sinner's face, and awakens him, breaks his carnal peace and security, brings him to himself, and lets him see his danger, fills him with remorse and terror. Hence Is. xxviii. 17. the hail is said to 'sweep down the refuge of lies,' before the sinner come to settle upon the *foundation*
that

that God hath *laid in Zion*. Acts. ii. 37. it is said, 'they were pricked in their heart,' and then they cried out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

2. There are the enlightening influences and breathings of the Spirit. Hence he is compared unto *eye-salve*, Rev. iii. 18. 'Ye have received an unction from the holy One, whereby ye know all things,' 1 John ii. 20. We read, Is. xxv. 7. of a vail and face of covering that is spread over all nations. The wind of the Holy Ghost must blow off this vail of ignorance and unbelief; and then the poor sinner comes to see a new world of wonders that he never saw before; a wonderful great God, a wonderful Redeemer, a wonderful covenant, and a wonderful holy law. Hence we are said to be 'translated out of darkness into a marvellous light. The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, even the deep things of God.' And 1 Cor. iii. 12. 'By the Spirit we know the things that are freely given to us of God.'

3. There are the renewing influences of the Spirit. We are said to be 'saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' Tit. iii. 5. Hence he is called 'a new Spirit.' He renews the will, and makes old things to pass away, and all things to become new.'

4. There are the comforting influences of the Spirit. This is the *south-wind*, as it were, gentle and easy, and refreshing; and therefore he is called 'the Comforter.' And indeed his consolations they are strong consolations; they put more gladness into the heart than corn, wine, and oil in abundance; fill the soul with a joy that is 'unspeakable, and full of glory.' And then,

5. There

5. There are the corroborating and strengthening influences of the Spirit. By the breathing of the Spirit the 'feeble' are made 'like David, and as the angel of God before him.' It is he that 'gives power to the saint, and increases strength to them that have no might.' It is by him that 'worm Jacob' is made to 'thresh the mountains, and to beat them small, and to make the hills as chaff.' And then,

6. There are the drawing and enlarging influences of the Spirit: 'Draw me,' says the spouse, 'we will run after thee.' The poor believer lies many times, as it were, wind-bound, that he is not able to move one step in the way of the Lord: but, O! when the Spirit of the Lord comes, then comes liberty and enlargement: 'I will run the way of thy commandments,' says David, 'when thou hast enlarged my heart,' to wit, by the influences of thy Spirit. He is like oil to their chariot-wheels; and when he comes, they are as the 'chariots of Amminadib,' or 'a willing people.'

7. There are the sin-mortifying and sin-killing influences of the Spirit: 'We, through the Spirit,' are said to 'mortify the deeds of the body, that so we may live.' When the wind of the Holy Ghost blows upon the soul, he not only makes the spices to revive, but he kills the weeds of sin and corruption, making them to wither and decay: so that the poor believer, who was crying, 'Wretched man, what shall I do to be delivered from this body of death!' he is made sometimes to tread upon the neck of these enemies, as a pledge of his complete victory at last. And then,

8. There

8. There are the interceding influences of the Spirit: Rom. viii. 26. 'The Spirit maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered'. He intercedes in a physical and efficient way. He makes us to wrestle and pray; therefore he is called 'the spirit of grace and supplications,' Zech. xii. 10. He fills the believer's heart and mouth with such a heavenly rhetoric, that God is not able to withstand it. Hence Jacob, 'he had power with the angel, and prevailed; for he wept and made supplication unto him.' And then,

9. There are the sealing and witnessing influences of the Spirit: He 'witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the sons of God.' He bears witness of the glorious fulness and suitableness of Christ to the soul: 'The spirit shall testify of me,' John xv. 26. And he is said to 'seal' believers 'to the day of redemption;' and his seal it is the earnest of glory: Eph. i. 13. 14. 'Ye are sealed by the holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance.' But these things I have not time to insist upon. So much for the *second* thing.

3. The *third* thing that I proposed here, was, to speak a little to the manner of the acting or operation of these influences, or how is it that this wind blows upon the soul? I answer.

1. then, The wind of the Holy Ghost blows very freely; the Spirit acts as an independent sovereign, John iii. 8. It doth not stay for the command, nor stop for the prohibition of any creature. So the breathings of the Spirit, they are sovereignly free as to the time of their donation, free as to their duration and continuance, free as to the mea-

sure, and free as to the manner of their working. And then,

2. He breathes on the soul sometimes very surprisingly: 'Or ever I was aware,' says the spouse, 'my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib.' Can thou not seal this in thy experience, believer, that sometimes, when thou hast gone to duty in a very heartless and lifeless condition, perhaps beginning to raze foundations, and to say with Zion, 'The Lord hath forsaken, and my God hath forgotten,' a gale from heaven has in a manner surprised thee, and set thee upon the high places of Jacob, and made thee to cry, with the spouse, 'It is the voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills? His anger endureth but for a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.'

3. These breathings and influences of the Spirit, they are sometimes very piercing and penetrating. The cold nipping north-wind, ye know, it goes to the very quick. The sword of the Spirit 'pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' Wind, you know, is of a very seeking, penetrating nature; it seeks through the closest chambers. So the Spirit, which is the candle of the Lord, 'searcheth the lower parts of the belly:' he makes a discovery of these lusts and idols that skulk in the secret chambers of the heart.

4. The breathings of this wind are very powerful, strong, and efficacious. Who can oppose the blow-
ings

ings of the wind? Some winds they have such a mighty force with them, that they bear down, overturn, and overthrow every thing that stands in their way. So the Spirit of the Lord sometimes, especially at first conversion, he breaks in upon the soul like the 'rushing of a mighty wind,' as he did upon the apostles, breaking down the strong-holds of iniquity, casting to the ground every high thought, and towering imagination of the soul, that exalted itself against Christ, with a powerful and triumphant efficacy. He masters the darkness of the mind, the contumacy and rebellion of the will, and the carnality of the affections: the enmity of the heart against God, and all the spiritual wickednesses that are in the high places of the soul, are made to fall down at his feet, as Dagon did before the ark of the Lord.

5. Although he act thus powerfully and irresistibly, yet it is with an overcoming sweetness, so as there is not the least violence offered unto any of the natural faculties of the soul; for whenever the Spirit comes with his saving influences, he sweetly overcomes the darkness of the mind; the sinner becomes a volunteer, and content to lift himself a soldier under Christ's banner: Psal. cx. 3. 'Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.' No sooner does Christ by his spirit say to the soul, 'Follow me,' but 'immediately they arise, and follow him.' Behold, 'we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.' Then,

6. There is something in the breathing of this wind that is incomprehensible by reason: John iii. 8. 'Thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth,' says

Christ: 'so is every one that is born of the Spirit.' There is something in the operation of the eternal Spirit and his influences beyond the reach, not only of natural, but of sanctified reason. Who can tell 'how the bones' are formed 'in the womb of her that is with child?' so far less can we tell how the Spirit forms the babe of grace in the heart; how he preserves, maintains, and cherishes the smoking flax, that it is not quite extinguished. We may in this case apply the words of the psalmist in another case, and say, 'Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known;' and that of the apostle, 'How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!'

7. These influences of the Spirit, they are sometimes felt before they be seen; as you know a man will feel the wind, and hear it, when he cannot see it. So it is with the Lord's people many times, on whom the Spirit breathes; they feel his actings, they are sensible that he has been dealing with them; and all that they can say about it is, with the man that was born blind, 'One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.' The kingdom of heaven comes not with observation.

4. The *fourth* thing proposed was, to speak a little to the necessity of these breathings. And here I shall shew, 1. That they are necessary. 2. To what things they are necessary.

1. That they are necessary, will appear,

1st, From the express declaration of Christ, John xv. 5. 'Without me ye can do nothing;' that is without the aid and influences of my Spirit. He doth not say, without me ye cannot do many things,

things, or great things; but, 'Without me ye can do nothing'.

2dly, It is evident from the express acknowledgment of the saints of God upon this head: 2 Cor. iii. 5. 'We are not' (says the apostle) 'sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God.' It is he that must work all our works in us and for us.

3dly, It is plain from the earnest prayers of the saints for the breathings of this wind: Cant. iv. 16. 'Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden.' Psal. lxxxv. 6. 'Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?' They are promised in the covenant, and therefore necessary: Is. xlv. 3. 'I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed,' &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. 'I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.' Now, there is not a mercy promised in the covenant that can be wanting. But,

2. To what are these breathings necessary? I answer, they are necessary,

1st, To the quickening of the elect of God, when they are stark dead in trespasses and sins. Can ever the dry bones live, unless this omnipotent wind blow upon them? It is strange, to hear some men that profess Christianity, talking of the power of their own wills to quicken and convert themselves. They may as well say, that a dead man may take his grave in his two arms, and lay death by him, and walk. 'No man,' says Christ, 'can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him.' Oh, what a dead weight

is the sinner, that a whole Trinity must draw! for both Father and Son draws the sinner by the breathings of the Holy Ghost.

2dly, These influences are necessary for the suitable discharge of every duty of religion. You cannot read, you cannot hear, you cannot pray or praise, you cannot communicate to any advantage, unless the wind of the Holy Ghost blow upon you. It is the Lord that must enlarge our steps under us, and make our feet like hinds feet in the ways of the Lord.

3dly, They are necessary for accomplishing our spiritual warfare against sin, Satan, and the world. We will never be able to combat with our spiritual enemies, if he do not help us: it is he only that must 'teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, 'so as bows of steel may be broken in pieces by 'us.' Without the Spirit we will fall before every temptation; like Peter, curse and swear, that he never knew him.

4thly, They are necessary to the exercise of grace already implanted in the soul. As we cannot work grace in our hearts, so neither can we exercise it without the renewed influences of the Holy Ghost, Cant. iv. 16. When this wind blows, then, and never till then, do the spices flow out. But I shall not stand on this: the Spirit's influences are necessary to all the uses mentioned upon the second head; for conviction, illumination, renovation, consolation, enlargement, mortification of sin, for assurance of our adoption.

5. The *fifth* thing that I proposed upon this head, was, to give you some of the seasons of these influences

of

of the Spirit: for the wind you know has its seasons and times of blowing and breathing. I shall only name a few of them to you.

1. The Spirit's reviving influences, they blow very ordinarily in a day of conversion. This, as you were hearing, is a season when this wind breathes on the soul, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. when God takes away the stony heart, and gives the heart of flesh. He puts his Spirit within them, when the soul is first espoused unto Christ. So Jer. ii. 2. 'I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.'

2. When the soul has been deeply humbled under a sense of sin and unworthiness. When Ephraim is brought low, and is smiting on his thigh, acknowledging his sin and folly, then the Spirit of the Lord comes with a reviving gale upon his spirit. 'Is Ephraim,' says the Lord, 'my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.'

3. After a dark night of desertion, when the Lord returns again, it is a time of sweet influences. After Zion had been crying, 'The Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me;' upon the back of it comes a sweet gale of the Spirit, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.'

4. Times of earnest prayer and wrestling; for he

giveth his Spirit to them that ask it. This is agreeable to the promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

5. Times of serious meditation are times of sweet influences of the Spirit: Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6, 8. 'When I
' remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee
' in the night-watches, my soul is satisfied as with
' marrow and fatness, and my soul followeth hard
' after thee.'

6. Communion days are sometimes days of sweet influences. Some of the Lord's people can attest it from their experience, with the spouse, that 'while
' the King sat at his table, the spikenard sent forth
' the smell thereof;' and when they 'sat down under
' his shadow,' they found 'his fruit sweet to their
' taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and
' his banner over me was love.'

7. The day of death has sometimes been found to be a day of such pleasant gales of the Spirit, that they have been made to enter into the haven of glory with the triumphant song in their mouth, saying, 'Thanks
' be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our
' Lord Jesus Christ.' Thus David, 'Although my
' house be not so with God; yet he hath made with
' me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things
' and sure: for this is all my salvation, and my desire.' Thus Simeon, thus Paul, &c.

III. The *third* thing in the text and doctrine to be spoken to, is 'the life that is effected and wrought
' in the souls of God's elect by these influences and
' breathings of the Holy Spirit.' Your time will not allow me to enlarge upon this. I shall
only

only tell you in a few particulars what sort of life it is.

1. It is a life of faith. The apostle calls it so, Gal. ii. 20. 'The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' And the just is said to 'live by faith.' The man is ay embracing a Redeemer, and the fulness of the Godhead in him; ay deriving fresh supplies out of that full treasury and store-house.

2. It is a life of justification. The law pronounces a curse against every one that 'doth not continue in all things written in the book of the law to do them.' The believer, he gets this sentence of death cancelled: Rom. viii. 1. 'There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.' And not only so, but he has the everlasting righteousness of Immanuel God-man imputed to him: so that with a holy boldness he may challenge justice, and challenge the law, what they have to say against him, as the apostle doth, Rom. viii. 33. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' &c.

3. It is a life of reconciliation with God; God and they are at friendship; which follows naturally on their justification: Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' God doth not retain the least grudge in his heart against them; and he and they walk together, because they are agreed; that is, they have fellowship one with another, according to that, 1 John i. 3. 'Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.'

4. It is a life of holiness and sanctification; for
E 5 the

the Spirit of the Lord, he is a cleansing, and purifying, and renewing Spirit; he renews the soul after the image of God; makes the heart, that was a cage of unclean birds, a fit temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in; he garnishes the soul, and makes it like the King's daughter, 'all glorious within.' They that had lien among the pots, become 'like the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.'

5 It is a very lightsome and comfortable life: and no wonder; for his name is *the Comforter*. His consolations are so strong, that they furnish the soul with ground of joy in the blackest and cloudiest day: Hab. iii. 17, 18. 'Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.' And the joy that he gives, it is deep: 'Your heart shall rejoice.' And it is abiding: 'Your joy shall no man take from you.' And it is such as cannot be made language of: 'We rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.'

6. It is a life of liberty; for 'where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.' He brings us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Before the Spirit comes with his saving influences, the man is in bondage; in bondage unto sin, unto Satan, unto the law, and unto the curse and condemnation of God: but the Spirit of the Lord he frees from all these. Christ, by his Spirit, he sets the captives of the mighty

mighty at liberty, and delivers the prey from the terrible.

7. It is a hid life: Col. iii. 3. 'Your life is hid ' with Christ in God.' And believers, they are called 'God's hidden ones,' Pſal. lxxxiii. 3. The spring and fountain of this life is hid, namely, an unseen Christ; for 'with him is the fountain of life.' The subject of this life is hid, even 'the hidden man of the 'heart.' The actings of this life are hid, and the means of its support; he feeds upon *the hidden manna*, and 'the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise 'of God.' And then the beauty and glory of this life is hid; for 'the King's daughter is all glorious within. The beauty of the hypocrite's life lies all in the outside, painted sepulchres.

8. It is a heavenly life; they are made to live above the world: *Our conversation is in heaven*, says the apostle. They look on themselves as pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and therefore look not so much to the things that are seen, as to the things that are not seen. With Moses, they 'have respect unto the 'recompence of the reward:' their eyes are set upon the land that is very far off, and the King in his beauty.

9. It is a royal life; for they are 'made kings and priests unto God, Rev. 6. They have a royal kingdom, of which they are heirs, 'I appoint unto you a 'kingdom,' says Christ; a royal crown, 'a crown of 'glory, which fadeth not away.' They shall have a royal throne at last, Rev. iii. 21. Royal robes, princely attire, the garments of salvation; a royal table provided for them, Is. xxv. 6. 'a feast of fat things, a 'feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of mar-

‘row, of wines on the lees well refined;’ a royal guard continually attending them, the angels of God, and the attributes of the divine nature, &c.

10. It is an eternal life; John xvii. 3. ‘This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. The saving knowledge of a God in Christ, what is it but the first dawns of eternal glory in the soul? And where he once dawns, he is ay in the ascendant until the mid-day of glory come; for ‘his goings forth are prepared as the morning.

IV. The *fourth* thing is the use of the doctrine. And waving other uses that might be made of this doctrine, I shall only improve it by way of *examination* and of *exhortation*.

The *first* use shall be of *trial* and *examination*. Oh try, Sirs, whether or not these saving influences of the Spirit did ever breathe upon your souls, yea or no. For your trial, I shall only suggest these few things.

1. If these breathings have blown upon thy soul, man, woman, then he has blown away the vail and face of the covering that was naturally upon thy mind and understanding. He has given you other views of spiritual and divine things, than you can have by any natural or acquired knowledge. The Spirit of the Lord, he is called ‘the spirit of wisdom and revelation,’ Eph. i. 17. because he reveals these things to the soul which flesh and blood is not able to receive or understand. So then, has the Spirit testified of Christ upon you? has he who ‘commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shined into your heart,

‘ to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of
 ‘ God, in the face of Jesus Christ?’ And as a fruit
 and consequent of this,

2. If the wind of the Holy Ghost has blown upon
 thy soul, he has blown away some of the filth of hell
 that did cleave to thy soul, and has transformed thee
 into his own image: 2 Cor. iii. 18. ‘ Behold as in a
 ‘ glass the glory of the Lord, thou art changed into
 ‘ the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the
 ‘ Spirit of the Lord.’ If you have the Spirit, the ‘ same
 ‘ mind’ will ‘ be in you, which was also in Christ
 ‘ Jesus;’ for ‘ he that is joined unto the Lord, is
 ‘ one spirit.’ You will imitate and resemble him
 in his imitable perfections, in his holiness, meek-
 ness, self-denial, patience. He is a holy God, and
 where-ever he comes he works holiness, and makes
 the soul holy.

3. If this wind has blown upon your souls, then it
 has driven you from your lying refuges, and made
 you take sanctuary in Christ. He has driven you
 from the law, and made you consent to the method of
 salvation through the righteousness of the Son of God:
 ‘ I through the law,’ says the apostle, ‘ am dead to the
 ‘ law, that I might live unto God’. This is the de-
 sign of all the Spirit’s influences, to lead sinners off
 from sin, off from self, off from the law, that they may
 rest in Christ only.

4. If ever you felt any of the reviving gales of this
 wind of the Spirit, you will long for new gales and
 breathings of it; and when these breathings are sus-
 pended and withheld, your souls will be like to faint,
 as it were, like a man that wants breath. You will
 pant for the air of the Spirit’s influences, like David,
 Psal.

NO S E R M O N S.

Pfal. lxiii. 1. 'My soul longeth for thee in a dry and
'thirsty land, where no water is;' and Psalm lxxxiv.
2. 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts
'of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for
'the living God:' Oh for another gale of his Spirit in
public ordinances!

5. If you have felt the breathings of this wind,
you will not snuff up the east-wind of sin and vani-
ty: John iv. 14. 'Whosoever drinketh of the water
'that I shall give him, shall never thirst.' You will
not thirst immoderately after the things of time: no,
no; you will see them to be but mere trash and
vanity. You will 'chuse that good part, which shall
'not be taken away from you.' You will 'seek those
'things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the
'right hand of God.'

6. If this wind has blown upon thy soul, then
you will follow the motion of this wind; you will
not run cross to this wind, but will go alongst with
it: I mean, you will yield yourselves unto the con-
duct of the Spirit speaking in his word; for 'as many
'as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons
'of God.'

But, say you, How shall I know if I be led by the
Spirit of God? I answer.

1st, If ye follow the Spirit, then you will not ful-
fil the lusts of the flesh; but, on the contrary, you
will study to 'crucify the flesh, with the affections
'and lusts.' You will be ready to cut off your right
hand, and to pluck out the right eye sins at the Lord's
command.

2^{dly}, Then the way wherein you walk will
be a way of holiness, for he is a Spirit of sanc-
tification;

tification; and a way of truth, for the Spirit of the Lord he is a Spirit of truth, and he leads into all truth: a way of uprightness: Psal cxlii. 10. 'The spirit is good, lead me into the land of 'uprightness'.

dly, Ye know leading imports spontaneity and willingness. There is a great difference between leading and drawing; between being driven by the wind, and following the motion of the wind. Sometimes indeed the wicked, a hypocrite, a natural man, by a strong north-wind of conviction, may be driven on to duty through the force of terror. But the believer, he is a volunteer, he freely yields himself to the Spirit's conduct; he rejoices to work righteousness, and to remember God in his ways. Whenever he hears the Spirit whispering in his ears, and saying, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' presently he complies. When the Spirit of the Lord says, *Come*, he immediately echoes back again, and says, 'Behold, I come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God.' Now, try yourselves by these things.

The *second* use shall be of *exhortation*. Is it so, that the influences of the Spirit are so necessary in order to our revival? then be exhorted to look up to heaven, and cry for the breathings of the Spirit. O Sirs, will ye turn the words of my text into a prayer, and say, 'Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I might inforce this exhortation by many motives: I only name them.

Met. 1. Consider, Sirs, that spiritual deadness is very prevalent in the day wherein we live. There is a great multitude of dry bones scattered up and down
our

our valley of vision. There are many that carry the marks of a deadly leprosy on their foreheads; their Atheism, their profanity, irreligion, and other gross abominations, plainly declare to the world, that they are stark dead in trespasses and sins. And, alas! may it not be for matter of lamentation, that even many of these, who, in the judgment of charity, have the root of the matter, the principles of spiritual life, are yet under sad decays of the life of grace? Alas! it is not with Scotland's ministers and professors as once in a day it has been. I might produce many melancholy evidences of this, if time would allow, Remember these already mentioned, the general loathing of the word, &c

Mot. 2. Consider the evil and danger of spiritual deadness. The evil of it will appear,

1st, If ye consider, that it is a frame of spirit directly cross to the command of God. God commands us to 'present ourselves a living sacrifice unto him;' and indeed 'this is our reasonable service,' Rom. xii. 1. Yea, it is cross unto the nature of God; for 'God is a Spirit,' John iv. 24. 'and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.'

2^{dly}, The evil and danger of it appears further from this, that it unfits the soul for every duty, and mars our communion and fellowship with God. God meets the living Christian in the way of duty: Thou 'meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways.' But for the man that comes to him with a Laodicean, dead, lifeless, and lukewarm frame of soul, he will
not

not hold communion with that man : no, he will spew him out of his mouth.

3dly, It opens a door for all other sin, and renders a man an easy prey unto every temptation. A dead man he can make no manner of resistance, he is carried down the stream without opposition. Then,

4thly, It lays a foundation for sad and terrible challenges from conscience. David's spiritual deadness brought him to that pass at the long run, that he is made to cry out of broken bones, &c.

Mot. 3. Consider, that as the breathings of the Spirit are necessary for every duty, so particularly for that solemn work which you have before your hands, of commemorating the death of the exalted Redeemer. I might here let you see, how the influences of the Spirit are necessary for every part of your work, (if time would allow). Without the Spirit's influences of light, you can never examine yourselves to purpose: it is 'the Spirit of the Almighty that giveth understanding' 'how to search out the mystery of iniquity in the heart, which is 'deceitful above all things, 'and desperately wicked.' And then, without the Spirit you cannot mourn for sin; for it is the kindly influences of the Spirit that thaws the heart into evangelical tears, Zech. xii. 10. Without the Spirit you cannot discern the broken body of a Redeemer; for it is the Spirit that testifies of Christ. 'I will pour 'the spirit of grace upon the house of David, and 'inhabitants of Jerusalem;' and then follows, 'They 'shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and 'they shall mourn for him.' In a word, you cannot exercise any grace, you cannot wrestle in prayer,
you

you cannot have any right views of the contrivance of redemption, you cannot take hold of God's covenant, or improve any promise of the covenant, without the Spirit.

Mot. 4. Consider the excellency of these influences of the Spirit.

1st, They blow from an excellent aith and original: the Holy Ghost is the author of them; and you know he proceeds from the Father and the Son. So that a whole Trinity, as it were, convey themselves with these breathings.

2^{dly}, They are the purchase of a Redeemer's blood, and therefore excellent. There is not the least grace, or the least gale of the Spirit, that is given to believers, but it cost Christ the blood of his heart. He purchased grace as well as glory.

3^{dly}, These influences of the Spirit, they, as it were, supply Christ's room while he is in glory. And truly, Sirs, I may safely say it upon scripture-warrant, that the presence of the Spirit with believers upon earth, is a greater blessing than the mere bodily presence of Christ: and therefore Christ tells his disciple by way of comfort, John xvi. 7. 'If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.' As if he said, "When I am gone, the Spirit will be poured out from on high, which is far better for you than my bodily presence."

4^{thly}, These breathings of the Spirit, they are pledges of glory, the earnest-penny of the inheritance: Eph. i. 13, 14. 'After that ye believed, ye were seal-

ed

‘ed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the
‘earnest of our inheritance.’

5thly, Their excellency appears from the excellent effects that they produce upon the soul. They beautify the soul on whom they fall, and make it like ‘a field which the Lord hath blessed.’ They render the soul ‘fruitful in every good word and work:’ Hof. xiv. 5. ‘I will be as the dew unto Israel:’ and what follows? ‘he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.’ Is. xlv. 3. ‘I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring:’ and then follows, vers. 4. ‘They shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses.’

Quest. What advice or counsel do you give, in order to our obtaining or recovering the enlightening and reviving gales of the Spirit?

Ans. 1. Be sensible of your deadness, and mourn over it; for the Lord ‘comforts them that mourn in Zion.’ He will ‘give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness:’ and then follows, ‘They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified,’ Is. lxi. 2, 3.

2. Be much upon the mount of divine meditation; for here it is that the Spirit of the Lord breathes: ‘While I was musing the fire burned,’ says David, Psal. xxxix. 3. Psal. lxxiii. 5, 6. ‘When I meditate on thee in the night-watches, my soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.’

3. Cry

3. Cry mightily unto God for these influences, that he would pour down his Spirit from on high : for ‘ if ye, being evil,’ (says Christ), ‘ know how to give ‘ good gifts unto your children : how much more shall ‘ your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them ‘ that ask him?’ Luke xi. 13. Plead the promises of the new covenant; and, particularly, be much in pleading this absolute promise of the Spirit, Is. xlv. 3. ‘ I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and ‘ floods upon the dry ground : I will pour my spirit ‘ upon thy seed,’ &c. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. ‘ I will put ‘ my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my ‘ statutes’. But still remember, Sirs, that these promises are to be managed by the prayer of faith. We are to turn God’s promise into prayers; for it is added, vers. 37. ‘ For these things I will ‘ be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for ‘ them.’

4. Make conscience of waiting on him in all the duties and ordinances of his appointment, particularly the preaching of the word. And beware of a legal frame of spirit in your attending upon these ordinances, as if thereby you could merit any thing at God’s hand, or as if God were obliged to you for what you do this way; for ‘ we receive the Spirit,’ says the apostle, ‘ not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith.’ Gospel-ordinances are the usual chariots in which the Spirit rides, when he makes his entrance at first, or when he returns into the soul after absence.

5. *Lastly*, Study to have union with Christ; for it is upon them that are in Christ, that the Spirit of God and of glory rests: ‘ He that is joined ‘ unto

'unto the Lord, is one spirit' with him. The oil of gladness that was poured upon the head of our exalted Aaron, it runs down upon the skirts of his garments, upon every member of his mystical body.



The

The KING held in the galleries.

SERMON preached on Sabbath-evening, immediately after the celebration of the LORD's supper, at Dunfermline, June 2. 1717.

CANT. vii. 5.

The King is held in the galleries.

OUR blessed Lord Jesus, who is represented under the notion of a Bridegroom in this book, from the 4th verse of the preceding chapter, he breaks out in the commendation of his spouse and bride, venting the love of his heart toward her in many warm and pathetic expressions; and his discourse is continued to the 10th verse of this chapter; where we find him running out in the commendation of his church in several particulars. He commends her from her spiritual birth and pedigree, calling her 'a prince's daughter,' vers. 1. The saints of God are royally descended; by their second birth they are sprung of the Ancient of days; 'born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Again, he commends her from the beauty of holiness shining in her walk and conversation: 'How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!' Holiness is the attire of the bride of Christ: 'she is arrayed

‘arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the
 ‘righteousness of saints.’ But time will not allow me
 to explain the several particulars of her commendati-
 on. The words of my text they are an abrupt sen-
 tence; wherein he expresseth the wonderful compla-
 cency which he took in her society, and the over-
 powering influence that her faith, and his faithfulness,
 his love, and her loveliness, had to make him stay
 and abide in her company: ‘The King is held in the
 ‘galleries.’ In which words we may notice these
 particulars.

1. Christ’s character and office; he is a person of
 royal dignity, no less than a King, and *the King* by
 way of eminency. The church of God owns no o-
 ther King but Christ; for it is he whom God the
 Father has *set* to rule ‘upon the holy hill of Zion;’
 and it is a manifest invasion of Christ’s prerogative,
 for pope, prelate, or potentate, to usurp a sovereignty
 and headship over the church of Christ; an indignity
 which he will not suffer to pass without suitable re-
 sentment. He here owns himself to be the King of
 Zion, and will maintain the dignity of his crown a-
 gainst all that dare invade it. 2. In the words we
 have the place of converse between Christ and his
 blessed spouse and bride; it is ‘in the galleries’. It
 is the same word in the original which we have,
 Cant. i. 17. ‘The beams of our house are cedar,
 ‘and our rafters,’ or ‘galleries, of fir.’ Where, by
galleries in both places, according to the judicious
 Durham, we are to understand the ordinances of the
 gospel, in which Christ and his people do tryft and
 keep company one with another. Why gospel-ordi-
 nances are thus designed, I may shew more particu-
 larly

larly afterwards. 3. We have the sweet constraint that this royal Bridegroom was under to tarry in the galleries with his spouse; he here owns that he was *held or bound*, as the word signifies, 'in the galleries.' Her faith and love laid him under a voluntary arrest to tarry with her; like the disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 29. 'he constrained him to abide with her.' An expression much like this we have, Cant. iii. 4. After a weary night of desertion, and much tedious inquiry, she at length meets with her beloved, and thereupon she cries out, 'I held him, and would not let him go.'

Observe, *That Christ, the blessed King of Zion, condescends sometimes to be held and detained by his people in the galleries of gospel-ordinances. The King is held in the galleries.*

- I. I will give some account of this royal King.
- II. Of the galleries of the King.
- III. Of this holding of the King in the galleries.
- IV. Apply.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to *give some account of this royal King*. But, alas! 'who can declare his generation?' All I shall do, is only, 1. To prove that he is a King. 2. That he is *the King* by way of eminence and excellency.

First, That he is a King, appears from these particulars.

1. From the Father's designation and ordination. From all eternity the Father designed and ordained this dignity for him as our Mediator: for I do not
now

now speak of his natural and essential, but of his dispensatory or mediatory kingdom: 'I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion, Psal. ii. 6. and Psal. lxxxix. 27. 'I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.'

2. It appears from the prophecies that went of him before his actual manifestation in our nature. It was prophesied, that the sceptre of Judah should terminate in him, Gen. xlix. 10.; that he should succeed David, and sit upon his throne, Luke i. 32. 33. compared with Psal. cxxxii. 11. 'The Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end;' Is. ix. 6. and 'the government shall be upon his shoulders.'

3. It appears from the types and shadows that prefigured him. He was typified by Melchizedek, who is called 'the king of righteousness,' and 'the king of peace.' He was typified by David, and frequently called by the name of *David* in the Psalms and Prophets: Hof. iii. 5. 'The children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King. He was typified by Solomon, and by his name he is commonly called in this book of the Song.

4. It appears from the princely titles that are given him in scripture. He is called 'the Prince of peace,' 'the King of righteousness,' and 'the King of kings and Lord of lords;' and it is God the Father's will, that 'every one [should confess, that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

5. It appears from the princely prerogative and royalties that are assigned him by his Father. He has

anointed him to be King with an incomparable oil, even 'with the oil of gladness: I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him,' Psal. lxxxix. 20. He has installed him in the government with the solemnity of an open proclamation from heaven, by 'the voice which came from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.' He has put a sceptre of righteousness, and a rod of iron in his hand, whereby he is enabled to defend his subjects, destroy his enemies, and 'break them into pieces as a potter's vessel.' He has given him ambassadors to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom: 'He gave some, apostles: and some, prophets: and some, evangelists: and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.' He has given him vast territories, even 'the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost ends of the earth for his possession: his dominion reaches from sea to sea, and from the rivers to the ends of the earth.' It extends not only to the outward, but likewise to the inward man. He has a legislative authority; he can make, and explain, and abrogate laws at his pleasure. And when his laws are broken, he has the power of acquitting or condemning committed to him: 'For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' Thus you see he is a King.

Secondly, As he is a King, so he is *the King* by way of eminency and excellency. And this will be abundantly clear, if we consider,

1. That he is *the King eternal*, 1 Tim. i. 17. 'the everlasting Father, or, the Father of eternity,' Is. ix.

6. Other

6. Other kings are but of yesterday, mere upstarts, and, like a gourd, their glory withers in a night. But here is a King that is from everlasting to everlasting, the true 'Alpha and Omega, the beginning and 'the ending. Mic. v. 2. 'This 'ruler in Israel, his 'goings forth were from of old, from everlasting. And his throne is so firmly established, that it shall stand through all periods of time, yea, through the endless years of eternity: Psal. xlv. 6. 'Thy throne, O God, 'is for ever and ever.'

2. He is called *the King immortal*. 1 Tim. i. 17. In the last chapter of the same epistle, *He only hath immortality*. The potentates of the earth are but kings of clay; they and their thrones have their *foundations in the dust, and unto dust they shall return*. Death, the king of terrors, has raised its trophies of victory over the most renowned potentates: they who made the world to tremble with their sword, have been at last vanquished by death. But here is a king that never dies. It is true, death did once, by his own consent; obtain a seeming victory over him; but in that victory, *death itself was plagued, and the grave destroyed*, Hof. xiii. 4. Yea, it was not possible that he should be held in the bonds of death: no; he vanquished death in his own territories, and returned carrying the spoil of his enemy along with him, making open proclamation of the victory which he had gained to all his friends for their encouragement: Rev. i. 18. 'I am he that was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of 'hell and of death.'

3. He is *the King invisible*. Some eastern princes they were seldom seen of their subjects, to beget the

greater reverence and estimation among their subjects. But this was only an affectation of grandeur. Christ, the King of Zion, he is indeed visible to the eye of faith by the saints militant, and visible to the eye of sense by the saints triumphant; however, the thousand thousandth part of his divine glory can never be seen or searched out by any created understanding; for 'he dwells in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, 1 Tim. vi. 16. He is an unseen and unknown Christ by the greatest part of the world, as to his worth and excellency. And as to his corporeal presence, he is invisible by us in this state of mortality: for 'the heaven must contain him, until the times of restitution of all things;' and then indeed 'every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him.

4. He is 'the only blessed and happy King,' 1 Tim. vi. 15. 'the blessed and only Potentate. The crowns of other princes have their prickles, which make them to sit uneasy upon their heads; and the toil and trouble of government is sometimes so great, that the very beggar on the dunghill is happier in some respect than the king upon the throne. But Zion's King is in every respect happy and blessed. He is the darling of heaven and earth, the 'delight of his Father,' and 'the desire of all nations'. His crown does not totter, his subjects do not rebel; he is happy in them, and they in him: 'Men shall be blessed in him; and 'all nations shall call him blessed.

5. He is *the absolute and universal King*. His kingdom is universal in respect of all persons; the highest potentate, as well as the meanest beggar, are the subjects of his empire. This is his royal 'name
' written

‘written on his vesture, and on his thigh, the King
 ‘of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Rev. xix. 16. When-
 ever he will, he casts the mighty out of their seats,
 and advances them of low degree; sets the beggar on
 the throne, and causeth the king to sit on the dunghill:
 ‘He cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible to
 ‘the kings of the earth. Again, his government is
 universal in respect of all places. We read of several
 potentates who have grasped at the universal monarchy:
 but never any of them attained it, though indeed
 they extended their dominions far and wide. But
 here is a King whose empire reaches to heaven, earth,
 and hell. Again, it is universal in respect of all times:
 ‘He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and
 ‘of his kingdom there shall be no end.’

I might tell you further, to illustrate the eminency
 of this King, that he is the *King of glory*, the *almigh-
 ty King*, the *King of saints*, the *King of nations*. But
 from what has been said, we may see that he is a King
 of incomparable excellency, and what an honour it is
 to be with him, and to hold him in the galleries.
 But I go on to,

II. The *second* thing proposed, which was to ‘speak
 ‘a little of the galleries wherein this royal King tryeth
 ‘and keeps company with his people.’ We read,
 Song i. 4. of ‘the chambers of the King;’ and, chap.
 ii. 4. of ‘the King’s banqueting-house,’ or ‘cellars of
 ‘wine,’ into which the spouse had been brought: the
 same is called here *the galleries of the King*, viz. these
 ordinances in which the Lord Jesus reveals himself
 to his people in the house of their pilgrimage. Here

I will only, 1. Mention a few of these galleries. 2. Inquire why ordinances are compared to galleries.

First, I will only mention these few galleries.

1. There is the secret gallery of meditation, wherein David found God's 'loving kindness to be better 'than life,' and had his 'soul satisfied as with marrow and fatness.'

2. There is the gallery of prayer, wherein Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the covenant, and, like 'a prince, prevailed' for the blessing.

3. There is the gallery of reading of the scriptures, wherein the Ethiopian eunuch got such a discovery of the promised Messiah, as made him *go on his way rejoicing*.

4. There is the gallery of Christian converse anent soul-matters; wherein the disciples going to Emmaus had such a meeting with Christ, as made 'their hearts 'burn within them.'

5. There is the gallery of preaching, or of hearing of the word preached; 'by the foolishness of which 'God saveth them that believe.' Here it was that Lydia's heart was opened. And,

6. The sacraments of the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's supper, are galleries wherein Zion's King displays his glory before his people. The last of these is, by way of eminency, called *the communion*; not only because therein the people of God have communion one with another, but because therein they have 'fellowship with the Father, and with his Son 'Jesus Christ.'

Secondly, As to the second thing here, Why are these ordinances compared to galleries? I answer,

1. Galleries are magnificent apartments of royal and

and stately buildings. So there is a divine magnificence in the ordinances of the gospel, when countenanced with the presence of the great Master of assemblies. It is true, they appear mean and contemptible in the eyes of a prophane world, who are strangers to the power of godliness; but the man 'who has his 'senses' spiritually 'exercised to discern good and evil,' sees a divine greatness and magnificence in them, suitable to the state and royalty of 'the Prince 'of the kings of the earth.' And when the man is admitted to see the power and glory of God in them, he cannot but join issue with Jacob, saying, 'This is 'none other but the house of God, and this is the 'gate of heaven,' Gen. xxviii. 17.

2. Galleries are lightsome and pleasant apartments. O how pleasant and lightsome are ordinances to a gracious soul! Let a child of God be where he will, he reckons it but 'a dry and thirsty land, where no 'water is,' if he be not admitted to the galleries of ordinances, Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. See how the same holy man expresses his delight in ordinances, Psal. lxxxiv. 1. 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! I am sure this will be the language of every soul that has been in the galleries with the King this day.

3. Galleries are places of walk and converse, as is plain from Ezek. xli. 15. When a king or great man designs to be familiar with his friend, he will take a turn with him in the galleries. So it is in gospel-ordinances that Christ doth walk and converse with his people. Here it is that he gives them audience, allows them to be free and familiar with him, draws by the vail, communicates the secrets of his

covenant, and mysteries of his kingdom, which are hid from the wise and prudent of the world.

4. Galleries are places of public feasting and entertainment of friends. So it is in the mount of gospel-ordinances that the Lord has provided for his people 'a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.' Here it is that Christ says to his people, 'Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved'. Thus I have given you some account of the galleries of the King.

III. The *third* thing proposed was, to 'speak to the holding of the King in the galleries;' which is what I had principally in view. And here I will shew what this holding of Christ supposes and implies, both on the believer's part, and on Christ's part.

First, What does it suppose and imply on the believer's part?

1. It necessarily supposes a meeting with Christ in the galleries; for no person can hold that which they never had. You that never knew what it was to enjoy communion with Christ in his ordinances, this doctrine is a hidden mystery to you.

2. It supposes an high esteem of Christ, a love to, and liking of his company. We are at no pains to hold those whose company we care not for; but when we are pressing with a friend to stay with us, it says that we value his company. Sirs, there are various opinions about Christ among the hearers of the gospel. The profane world, they look upon him as a severe and tyrannical master, and therefore 'they will not have this man to reign over them; they say un-
' to

‘to the Almighty, Depart from us.’ Again, carnal, lukewarm professors, ‘see no form or comeliness in him, why he should be desired :’ and therefore they are ready to say with the daughters of Jerusalem, ‘What is thy beloved more than another beloved?’ They cannot see any taking excellency in the King of Zion. But it is otherwise with the believer : the glory and beauty of Christ darkens all created excellency in his eye ; his language is, ‘Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. He is as the apple-tree among the trees of the wood ; the standard-bearer among ten thousand.’

3. On the believer’s part, this holding of Christ supposes a fear of losing him, or of being deprived of his company. The soul that has met with Christ, is afraid of a parting. It is true, the believer has no ground to fear the loss of Christ’s real and gracious presence ; for the union between Christ and him is indissoluble ; that promise can never fail, ‘I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.’ But as for his sensible and comfortable presence, they both may, and frequently do lose it ; the child of light many times walks in darkness. Now, it is the loss of this presence of Christ that the soul fears, when it is concerned to hold or bind the King in the galleries. Neither is this a fear of despondency, but a fear of activity and diligence.

4. It supposes a seeming willingness in Christ to withdraw from his people after their sweetest enjoyments. Many times Christ’s carriage, in his dispensations towards his people, seems to have a language much like that to Jacob, when he said to me, ‘Let

'me go;' or like his carriage towards the two disciples going to Emmaus, He made as if he would leave their company, and go on in his way. And his carriage seems to have this language, especially when he challenges them for bad entertainment they have formerly given him, when he lets loose the tempter to buffet them after signal manifestations, or when he tryts them with sharp troubles and afflictions. In all these cases he seems as it were to be turning about the face of his throne from them.

5. It implies a holy solicitude, and earnest desire of soul, to have his presence continued. When Christ is hiding, there is nothing the believer desires more than his return: 'O that I knew where I might find him!' And when they have found him, there is nothing they desire more than to keep his company, or that he would not be any more to them as a stranger or wayfaring man. O, says the soul, when it gets a meeting with the Lord Jesus, 'A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts,' Cant. i. 13. As if she had said, "If he will stay with me, I will deny him nothing I can afford, I will entertain him with the highest evidences of cordial affection."

6. It implies an ardent breathing of soul after more and more nearness to Christ, and further discoveries of him. There is not such a high discovery of Christ attainable in this life, but there is ay a step beyond it. The believer would always have more of Christ, Cant. ii. 5. The spouse there is brought into the banqueting-house, and allowed to feast and feed liberally upon the Redeemer's love, and to sit down under his displayed banner; and yet at that very instant she
cries

cries out, 'Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love.' As if she had said, 'Let me lie down among these comforts; let me roll myself perpetually among the blessed apples of the tree of life.' They who have got so much of Christ as to be staled of his company, they never knew what his presence was.

7. It implies a firm resolution not to part with his company: 'I held him,' says the spouse, 'and would not let him go, Song iii. 4. The like we see in Jacob, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me;' that is, I am resolved, that thou and I shall not part, cost what it will.

8. It implies a cleaving or adhering to Christ with the whole strength and vigour of the soul.

Quest. How, or wherein does the soul put forth its strength in cleaving to Christ? I answer, it does it by these three especially.

1st, By the lively exercise of faith. Hence faith is called an apprehending of Christ, and a cleaving to him, as Barnabas exhorts the Christians at Antioch to 'cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart.' The poor soul says to Christ in this case, as Ruth did to Naomi, 'Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.' An instance of this cleaving to Christ we have in the Canaanitish woman; she, as it were, clasps about him, and will by no means quit her gripe, notwithstanding all repulses.

2^{dly}, The soul binds or holds Christ in the galleries by sincere and ardent love. Love is a very uni-

ting affection ; by this one soul cleaves to another. As Shechem's soul did cleave to Christ: and this is a cord that cannot be easily broken : Cant. viii. 7.

' Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it : if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.' See for this also, Rom. viii. 35. ' Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?' &c.

3dly, The soul cleaves to Christ by fervent and ardent prayer. Jacob he held the Angel of the covenant, and would not let him go : Hof. xii. 3. 4. ' By his strength he had power with God : yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed :' for ' he wept and made supplication unto him. The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man' has a strange prevalence with Christ ; it offers a holy kind of violence to him ; and so binds him in the galleries that he cannot depart. Thus you see what it implies on the believer's part.

Secondly, What does it imply on Christ's part, *The King is held in the galleries?*

1. It implies amazing grace and condescendency toward the work of his own hands : ' He humbles himself,' even when ' he beholds the things that are in heaven ;' much more when he bows the heavens, and walks with his people in the galleries of ordinances ; and yet more when he is held by them in the galleries. This is such strange condescension, that Solomon, the greatest of kings, and the wisest of men, he wondered at it ; and wise men do not wonder at trifles : ' Will God' (saith he) ' in very deed dwell with men on the earth ?'

2. It implies Christ's great delight in the society of his

his people. He loves to be among them; where two or three of them are met in his name, he will be in the midst of them: 'He rejoiced' from all eternity 'in the habitable part of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men,' Prov. viii. 31.

3. It implies, that there are certain cords which have a constraining power to stay him in his people's company: and sure they must be strong cords indeed wherewith Omnipotency is bound. I mention two or three.

1st, He is bound by the cord of his own faithfulness, which he has laid in pawn in the promise. He has promised, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;' and he will not deny his word, 'his covenant he will not break.' This was the prevailing argument wherewith Moses detained him in the camp of Israel, when he was threatening utterly to consume that wicked people, Exod. xxxii. 10. 13. 'Let me alone,' saith the Lord to Moses, 'that I may consume them. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven.' He binds him with his own covenant, ratified with the solemnity of an oath.

2^{dly}, He is bound in the galleries by the cord of his own love. As a compassionate mother cannot leave her child, when it cleaveth to her, and clasps about her: so Christ's compassionate heart will not let him leave his people; his love to them surpasses the love of the most compassionate mother or tender-hearted parent: 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget

‘forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me,’ Is. xlix. 15, 16.

3^{dly}, He is bound to them by the bond of marriage: ‘Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name:’ he has ‘betrothed them to himself in righteousness, judgment, loving kindness, and mercies;’ and he ‘rejoiceth over them, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride:’ and because of this he will not, he cannot leave them.

IV. The *fourth* thing was, the *application* of the doctrine: and the *first* use is of *information*. Is it so that Zion’s King is sometimes held in the galleries of gospel-ordinances? Then,

1. See hence the happiness and dignity of the saints of God beyond the rest of the world. We reckon that person highly honoured, who is admitted to the king’s presence-chamber, and to walk with him in his galleries. ‘This honour have all the saints,’ either in a greater or lesser degree: ‘Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.’ And therefore I may infer, that they are ‘the excellent ones in the earth,’ and ‘more excellent than their neighbour. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.’

2. See hence why the saints put such a value and estimate on gospel-ordinances. David every where declares his esteem of them: ‘I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.’ He would ‘rather be a door-keeper in the house of his God, than dwell in the tents of sin.’ Why, what is the matter? The plain matter

matter is this, they are the galleries where Zion's King doth walk, and manifest his glory unto his subjects: Psal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord.' I pass other uses, and go on to a

Second use of this doctrine, and that is by way of trial and examination. My friends, you have been in the galleries of the King of Zion; but that is not enough: and therefore let me ask, Have you been in the galleries with the King? and have you been holding the King in the galleries? There are many poor ignorant creatures, who, if they get a token, and win to a communion-table, think all is right and clear between God and them, like the whore, Prov. vii. 14. 'Peace-offerings are with me; this day have I paid my vows.' But, Oh Sirs, remember folk may win in to the outer galleries of ordinances, and never win in to the inner gallery of communion with the Lord Jesus. For your trial as to this matter, I shall only propose a few questions to you.

Quest. 1. What did you hear in the galleries? what said the King unto you? For, as I told you, the galleries of ordinances are the place of audience, where the King of Zion converses with his people. And readily, if he hath spoken with you, you will remember what he said; for he 'speaks as never man spake,' he has 'the tongue of the learned,' and his 'words are as goads, as nails fastened in a sure place.' The spouse, we find, she had been in the chamber of presence, and in the banqueting house: she tells that the King spake with her, and she remembers what

what he said, Cant. ii. 10. 'My beloved spake, and
 'said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and
 'come away.' So then, did the King speak with you
 in the galleries? did he speak a word of conviction,
 or a word of comfort, a word of peace, or a word of
 consolation? or whatever it be. *Quest.* How shall I
 know that it was his voice, and not the voice of a
 stranger? *Answ.* The sheep of Christ, they have a nat-
 ural instinct whereby they know his voice; it has a
 different sound from the voice of a stranger; and if
 you be the sheep of Christ, you will know it better
 than I can tell you it by words. When he speaks, he
 makes the heart to burn; and you will be ready to
 say with the disciples, 'Did not our heart burn with-
 'in us, while he talked with us' in the galleries? His words have kindled a flame of love that many
 waters cannot quench; a flame of zeal for his glory;
 a flame of holy joy, so that you will be ready to say
 with David, 'God hath spoken in his holiness, I will
 'rejoice.' When he speaks, he makes the soul to
 speak, whose lips were formerly closed; for his voice
 'makes the lips of those that are asleep, to speak.' If
 he has said, 'Seek ye my face;' your souls have e-
 'choed, 'Thy face, Lord, will I seek.' If he has
 said, 'Come;' thy soul has answered, 'Behold, I
 'come unto thee, for thou art the Lord my God.'
 If he has spoken peace to you this day in the galle-
 ries, you will be concerned not to return again unto
 folly; you have been made to say with Ephraim,
 'What have I to do any more with idols?'

Quest. 2. I ask, What did you see in the galleries?
 Many sights are to be seen in the galleries of ordinan-
 ces, and particularly in that of the Lord's supper.
 Here

Here 'the Lamb of God' is to be seen, 'which taketh away the sin of the world;' and in a crucified Christ, who is evidently set forth in that ordinance, all the divine attributes and perfections shine with a greater lustre, than in the large volume of the creation. Here we might see the seemingly different claims of mercy and justice, with respect unto fallen man, sweetly reconciled: the healing overture is, that the surety shall die in the room of the sinner; and thus justice shall be satisfied, and mercy for ever magnified. Here you might see the holiness and equity of God's nature sparkling in flames of wrath against him who was made sin for you; the sword awakened, even against the man that is God's fellow, wounds and bruises him for your iniquities. There you might see the power of God spoiling principalities and powers, shaking the foundation of the devil's kingdom, and laying the foundation of a happy eternity for an elect world, in the death and blood of the eternal Son. In this ordinance you might have seen him writing his love in characters of blood; love which hath neither brim, bottom, nor boundaries. Here he was to be seen as 'the Amen, the faithful and true witness,' girt with the golden girdle of faithfulness, sealing the covenant, and confirming it with many. Now, I say, have you seen any thing of this? Are you saying, 'We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father?' Did any of these divine rays of Zion's King break forth upon your soul? If so, then I am sure it has had something of a transforming efficacy with it; according to what we have, 2 Cor. iii. 18. 'All we with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed

‘ changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.’ Jacob’s cattle, you know, by the very working of fancy in the conception, by beholding the pilled rods, brought forth their young speckled and spotted. Now, if fancy could work such a resemblance, what must the eye of faith do, when it beholds the glory of God in the face of Christ, who is ‘ the express image of his person ?’ John i. 14. 16. ‘ The Word was made flesh, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.’ It is remarkable, that by beholding his glory, we receive grace for grace. As the wax receives letter for letter from the seal, or as the child receives limb for limb from the parent ; so, by beholding Christ, we receive grace for grace from him : for as there is never a grace in Christ, when it is seen by faith, but it works something of a parallel grace on the soul. So then, try yourselves by this, and you may know whether you have been indeed in the galleries with the King.

Quest. 3. I ask, What have you tasted in the galleries ? for, as you heard, galleries are for feasting and entertainment of friends. Now, did the King say to you, or is he yet saying it, ‘ Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved ?’ Did he make you to eat of the fatness of his house, and to drink of the rivers of his pleasures ? ‘ If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious,’ then I am sure you will, ‘ as new-born babes, desire’ and thirst after ‘ the sincere milk of the word :’ you will be saying, ‘ Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples ;’ let me have more and more of this delicious fare. If
you

you have been feasted with the King in the galleries, the world, and all the pleasures of it, will be as nothing in your eye, in comparison of Christ and the intimations of his love. O, says David, when his soul was satisfied as with marrow and fatness, 'Thy loving-kindness is better than life, and all the comforts of life; they are but dung and loss when laid in the balance with him. If you have been feasting in the galleries, you will be desirous that others may share of the meal you have gotten; and, with David, be ready to say, 'O taste and see that God is good.' You will proclaim the praises of his goodness, as you have occasion, to them that fear him: 'Come and hear, 'all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.' And readily it will be the desire of your soul to abide in his presence, and to dwell, as it were, in the galleries of ordinances. O 'it is good for us to be here! let us build tabernacles here,' said Peter, on the mount of transfiguration. That will be the language of thy soul, Psal. xxvii. 4. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' So much for an use of trial.

Use *third* may be in a short word directed to two or three sorts of persons. 1. To you who know nothing of this doctrine, never met with the King in the galleries. 2. To you who have had a comfortable meeting with him. 3. To these who perhaps are complaining, 'I sought him, but I found him not.'

First, To you who never yet knew what it was to have a meeting with Zion's King in the galleries of gospel-

gospel-ordinances; and perhaps, Gallio-like, you care for none of these things. To you I shall only say,

1. Your condition is truly sad and lamentable, beyond expression or imagination. You are 'aliens to Israel's common-wealth, strangers to the covenant of promise, without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world. You are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity;' under the curse of God, and condemnation of the law, and absolute power of Satan, who rules in the children of disobedience. You are lying within the sea-mark of God's wrath; and if you die in this condition, you will drink the dregs of the cup of his indignation through all eternity.

2. If you have in this case adventured to the galleries of a communion-table, you have run a very dreadful risk. You have adventured to the King's presence without his warrant, and without the wedding-garment of imputed righteousness, or of inherent holiness; and therefore have run the risk of being bound, hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness: you have been 'eating and drinking judgment' to your own souls, and are 'guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.' And therefore,

3. For the Lord's sake, let me beseech you to repent of your wickedness. Flee out of your lost and miserable condition, flee to the horns of the altar. We declare to you, that there is yet hope in Israel concerning you. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,' *Is. lv. 7.*

Secondly,

Secondly, A *second* sort of persons are these who have this day had a meeting with Zion's King in the galleries of ordinances. I shall only offer a word of exhortation to you, and of advice.

1. A word of exhortation. Have you met with the King in the galleries? O then be exhorted to hold him, and bind him in the galleries; take him with you from the more open and solemn galleries of public ordinances, unto the more private and secret galleries of prayer, meditation, conference, and the like; follow the spouse's practice when she found him; 'she held him, and would not let him go, until she had brought him into her mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived her.' To engage you to hold him, take these motives.

Mot. 1. Consider his invaluable worth and excellency. The tongues of angels, let be of men, do but falter and stammer when they speak of him. His worth is best known by the character he gives of himself in his word. View him absolutely in himself; he is 'the only begotten of the Father, the mighty God, the Prince of peace.' View him comparatively; he is 'fairer than the children of men, as the apple tree among the trees of the wood; the standard-bearer among ten thousand.' View him relatively; he is thy *Head*, thy *Husband*, thy *Friend*, thy *Father*, thy *elder Brother*, thy *Surety*, *Shepherd*, and *Redeemer*; and, in a word, he is *all and in all*. And should not this make you to hold him?

Mot. 2. Consider, that thy happiness, believer, lies in the enjoyment of him. What is it, do ye think, Sirs, that constitutes the happiness of heaven through eternity? It is Christ's presence, a Mediator, the King
of

of Zion, manifesting his heart-charming beauty unto saints and angels through eternity. And what is it that raises the poor soul to the very suburbs of glory while in the wilderness? It is Christ manifesting himself in a sensible way to the soul: O this, this is it that fills the soul with 'joy unspeakable, and full of glory!' The advantages that do attend his presence with the soul are great and glorious. A cabinet of counsel attends his presence; he brings light with him; and no wonder, for he is 'the Sun of righteousness:' the vail and face of the covering is rent when Christ comes, and darkness is turned into light. His presence has a mighty influence upon the believer's work in the wilderness; the believer then 'rides upon the high places of Jacob;' he runs swiftly 'like the chariots of Amminadib.' His presence inspires with courage and strength; it makes 'the feeble soul as David, and David as the angel of God;' it 'gives power to the faint, and increases strength to them that have no might.' The soldier fights with courage when his captain is at hand. The poor believer is not afraid to encounter the king of terrors himself, when he is holding Christ in the arms of faith: Psal. xxiii. 4. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' So let this encourage you to hold him.

Mot. 3. Consider at what a dear rate this privilege was purchased for thee. Before Christ could pay thy soul a visit in the galleries, he behoved to swim a river and ocean of blood, to tread the wine-press of his Father's wrath. Justice had rolled insuperable mountains

tains in his way, and these mountains he must pass, and make as a plain, before he could shew himself in the galleries to thy soul. Does not this oblige you to entertain him, and give him welcome when come?

Met. 4. If you quit your gripes of him, and suffer him to depart, it may cost you very dear before you get another meeting with him. It is true, 'his kindness shall never depart from thee, the covenant of his peace shall never be removed.' His gracious presence can never be lost; but his quickening, comforting, strengthening, and upholding presence may be lost: and even this may be of very dreadful consequence. As his presence is a heaven upon earth, so sometimes a hell upon earth follows his absence. Job, through his hiding, is made to 'go mourning without the sun;' yea, to such a pass is he brought, through the frowns of God's countenance, that he is made to cry, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.' And see what a pass Heman is brought to under desertion, Psalm lxxxviii. 6, 7. 'Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me; and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.' And again, verse 15. 'While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.' Let all these considerations, and many others I might name, quicken your diligence in holding the King in the galleries.

2. I come to offer you a few advices, in order to your holding the King in the galleries, and maintaining his presence with you.

1st, See that you keep his lodging clean, and beware of
of

of every thing that may provoke him to withdraw. This was the practice of the spouse after she had obtained a meeting with Christ, Cant. iii. 5. 'I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please.' Particularly, there are two or three evils that you would carefully guard against. Beware of security. If you were paying a visit to your relation, you would think him tired of your company, if he would fall asleep beside you. Has Christ paid a visit to thy soul, and wilt thou fall asleep in his presence and company? This is very provoking to the Lord Jesus. Cant. v. 3. the spouse there entertains Christ's visit with sloth; 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' But what comes of it? Christ withdrew, verse 6. 'I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.' Beware of turning proud of your attainments. Pride of gifts, pride of grace, pride of attainments, is what Christ cannot away with: he gives grace to the humble, but he resisteth the proud, and beholdeth them afar off.' Beware of worldly-mindedness, or suffering your hearts to go out immoderately after the things of time; for this is displeasing to the Lord, and intercepts the light of his countenance: Is. lvii. 17. 'For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth. The friendship of this world is enmity with God.' Beware of unbelief, the root of all other evils, and particularly the root and source
of

of distance and estrangement between Christ and the soul; for 'an evil heart of unbelief' causes 'to depart' from the living God.' In a word, keep a strict watch and guard against every thing that may defile the lodging of Christ in thy soul. Under the law, God appointed porters to keep watch at the doors of the temple, that nothing might enter in to defile that house which was the dwelling-place of his name. Thy soul and body is the temple wherein Christ dwells by his holy Spirit: and therefore guard against every thing that may defile it, and provoke him to depart; for 'if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are,' 1 Cor. iii. 17.

2dly, If you would hold the King in the galleries, it is necessary that grace be kept in a living exercise; for these are the spikenard and spices that send forth a pleasant smell in his nostrils. Let faith be kept in exercise; let this eye be continually on him: he is exceedingly taken with the looks of faith: Cant. iv. 9. 'Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.' Keep the fire of love burning upon the altar of thy heart; for Christ loves to dwell in a warm heart: 1 John iv. 16. 'He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.' Maintain a holy and evangelical tenderness and melting of heart for sin; for 'the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.' And let hope be kept up in opposition to a sinking despondency. Christ does not love to see his friends drooping in his

VOL. I. G company:

company: no, no; 'he takes pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.'

3dly, If you would have Christ staying with you in the galleries, you must put much work in his hand; for Christ does not love to stay where he gets no employment. Hast thou any strong corruption to be subdued? Tell him of it; for this is one part of his work, to subdue the iniquities of his people. Hast thou no sin to be pardoned, the guilt whereof has many times stared thee in the face? Tell him of it; for 'his name is Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins'. Hast thou no want to be supplied? Tell him of it; for there is all fulness in him, fulness of merit and Spirit, fulness of grace and truth: he has a liberal heart, and he devises liberal things. Hast thou no doubts or difficulties to be resolved? Tell him your doubts; for he is 'an interpreter among a thousand.' Employ him, not only for yourselves, but for others. Employ him for your mother-church; intreat him to come unto your mother's house, and to the chambers of her that conceived you; that he would break these heavy yokes that are wreathed about her neck at this day; that he may build up the walls of his Jerusalem, make her a peaceable habitation, and the praise of the whole earth; that he may take the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, I mean, such teachers and preachers as are troubling the peace of the church, and obstructing the progress of the gospel, with their new-fangled opinions. But I must not insist.

Thirdly, A *third* sort of persons I proposed to speak to, were these who are perhaps complaining, that they have been attending in the galleries of ordinances,
and

and particularly at a communion-table; yet they cannot say, dare not say, that they were privileged to see the King's face. Alas! may some poor soul be saying, I thought to have got a meeting with Zion's King, but hitherto I have missed my errand: 'The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me: and I, whither shall I go?' *Answ.* I shall only suggest a word of encouragement and advice unto such of the Lord's people as may be in this case.

1. A word of encouragement.

1st, then, Do not think thy case unprecedented. Poor soul, what thinkest thou of David, Asaph, Heman, yea, of Christ himself?

2^{dly}, Although Zion's King may hide himself for a little, yet he will not always hide, 'lest the spirit should fail before him: Psalm xxx. 4, 5. 'Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness. For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.' Is. liv. 7, 8. 'For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.'

3^{dly}, Perhaps the King has been in the galleries with thy soul, when yet thou wast not aware that it was he. He was with Jacob at Bethel, and he wist it not; he was with the disciples going to Emmaus, and yet they mistook him. *Quest.* How shall I know

whether the King has been in the galleries with my soul? For answer,

(1.) Art thou mourning and sorrowing over thy apprehended loss? Does it grieve thee at the very heart to think, that thou shouldst be at Jerusalem, and not see the King's face; at the King's table, and not have the King's company? If this be real matter of exercise to thee, thou dost not want his gracious presence, though thou art not aware; for 'he is ever
' nigh unto them that are of a broken heart.' Christ is at Mary's hand when she is drowned in tears for the want of his company, and saying, 'They
' have taken away my Lord, and I know not where
' they have laid him.'

(2.) Hast thou not got a further discovery of thine own emptiness, poverty, and nakedness? and is thy soul abased and laid in the dust on this account? This says Christ has been present; for he comes in a work of humiliation, as well as in a work of consolation. Perhaps the devil is condemning, the law is condemning, conscience is condemning thee, and thou art condemning thyself as fast as any: be not discouraged, Christ is not far away, Psalm cix. 31. 'He
' stands at the right hand of the poor, to save him from
' those that condemn his soul.'

(3.) Art thou justifying the Lord, and laying the blame of thy punishment upon thyself, as David, Psalm xxii. 1, 2, 3. 'My God, my God, why hast
' thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from help-
' ing me, and from the words of my roaring? O
' my God, I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest me
' not; and in the night-season, and am not silent.

' But

‘ But thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the praiſes
‘ of Iſrael.’

(4.) Is thy hunger and thirſt after Chriſt in-
creaſed by thy apprehended want of his gracious
preſence? This ſays that he has been really pre-
ſent, for his bleſſing is upon thee: Matth. v. 6.
‘ Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after
‘ righteouſneſs.’ And know for thy comfort, that
‘ he ſatiſfieth the longing ſoul, and filleth the hungry
‘ ſoul with good things.’

(5.) Art thou reſolved to wait on him and keep his
way, although he hide his face and withdraw his ſenſi-
ble preſence? Chriſt has not been altogether a ſtran-
ger; no, ‘ he is good unto them that wait for him, to
‘ the ſoul that ſeeketh him;’ and ‘ is’ really ‘ nigh
‘ unto all that call upon him in truth.’

2. A word of advice, and only in ſo many words.

1^{ſt}, Give not way to deſpondency; argue againſt
it, as David, Pſalm xlii. 5. ‘ Why art thou caſt down,
‘ O my ſoul? and why art thou diſquieted in me?
‘ hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the
‘ help of his countenance.’

2^{dly}, See that you juſtify God, and beware of charg-
ing him fooliſhly. See what was David’s practice,
(and herein he was a type of Chriſt himſelf,) Pſalm
xxii. He is under hidings, verſe 1. ‘ My God, my
‘ God, why haſt thou forſaken me?’ &c. What fol-
lows? verſe 3. ‘ But thou art holy, O thou that in-
‘ habiteſt the praiſes of Iſrael.’

3^{dly}, Truſt in a hiding God, as Job did, ‘ Though
‘ he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Job xiii. 15. This
the Lord calls his people to under darkneſs, If. l. 10.
‘ Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obey-

‘eth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.’

4thly, and *lastly*, Wait on him in the galleries of ordinances, hang about the posts of his door. And when you do not find him in public, seek him in private, and in the retired galleries of secret prayer, meditation, and conference; and go a little further, like the spouse, above and beyond all duties and ordinances, to himself: ‘He is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.’ The spouse did so, and at length she found him whom her soul loved: Cant. iii. 4. ‘It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go.’ The Lord bless his word.

The

The groans of believers under their burdens.

A

SERMON preached in the Tolbooth-church of Edinburgh, on a fast-day preceding the celebration of the LORD's supper, October 27. 1720.

Psal. xxxviii. 9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee : and my groaning is not hid from thee.*

Rom viii. 26. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities : — and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*

2 COR. V. 4.

We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.

IN the first verse of this chapter, the apostle gives a reason, why he and others of the saints in this day, did endure persecution for the cause of Christ, with such an unshaken constancy, and holy magnanimity ; he tells us that they had the prospect of better things, the solid and well grounded hope of a happy immortality to follow upon the dissolution of this clay-tabernacle of the body. Ye need not wonder, would he say, though we chearfully and willingly undergo the sharpest trials for religion ; ' for we know, that if our

'earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' When the poor believer can say with David, 'I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever,' he will be ready to join issue with the same holy man, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' Yea, so far is the apostle from being damped or discouraged at the thoughts of death, that he rather invites it to do its office, by striking down the clay-tabernacle, that his soul may be at liberty to ascend to these mansions of glory, that his blessed friend and elder brother hath prepared for him above: verse 2. 'In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.' He knew very well, that when he should be stript of his mortal body, he 'should not be found naked,' as it is verse 3, but clothed with a robe of glory and immortality. And in the verse read, he gives a reason why he was so desirous to change his quarters; and it is drawn from the uneasiness and inconvenience of his present lodging, while cooped up in this clay-tabernacle: 'We that are in this tabernacle,' says he, 'do groan, being burdened.'

In which words we may briefly notice, 1. The believer's present lodging or habitation; he is in a *tabernacle*. 2. His melancholy disposition; he is *groaning*. 3. The cause or reason of his groans; *being burdened*.

1. I say, we have an account of the believer's present lodging or habitation; he is 'in this tabernacle.' By the *tabernacle* here we are to understand the body; so called, because it is a weak, moveable sort of habitation;

tation; (as we may hear more fully afterwards.) The indweller of this lodging is the noble soul, which is said to be 'in this tabernacle,' while it is an imbodied state. So that the meaning is, 'We that are in 'this tabernacle,' that is, we that are living in the body.

2. We have the melancholy disposition of the poor believer while in this lodging; he *groans*. The word in the original, *συναίω*, rendered, *to groan*, we find it taken in a threefold sense in scripture. *1st*, It is an expression of grief: Heb. xiii. 17. 'Obey them that 'have the rule over you, that they may give their account of you, not with grief;' or, as it may be rendered, 'not with groans.' It is the same word that is here used. There is nothing more ordinary, when a person is weighed and pressed in spirit, than to give vent to the heart in sobs and groans: and thus stands the case with the Lord's people many times, while in the tabernacle of the body. *2dly*, It is sometimes an expression of displeasure: James v. 9. 'Grudge not 'one against another'. It is the same word that is here rendered *to groan*. And so it imports, that the believer is dissatisfied with, or disaffected to his present quarters; he does not like it, in comparison of the better habitation that he has in view. *3dly*, It is sometimes taken as an expression of ardent, passionate, and earnest desire. Thus the word is taken in the second verse of this chapter, 'In this we groan earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with our house 'which is from heaven.' I shall not exclude any of these senses from the apostle's scope in these words.

3. In the words we have the cause or reason of the

believer's groans; *being burdened*. Many a weary weight and heavy load has the believer hanging about him, while passing through this vally of Baca, which make him to go many times with a bowed-down back. What these weights and burdens are, ye may hear more fully afterward.

The observation I offer from the words is this.

DOCT. *That believers are many times burdened, even unto groaning, while in the clay tabernacle of the body. We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.*

The method I shall observe in handling this doctrine, is, to give you some account,

I. Of the believer's present lodging; he is in a tabernacle.

II. Of the believer's burdens in this tabernacle.

III. Of his groans under these burdens.

IV. Conclude with some improvement of the whole.

I. The *first* thing is, to give you some account of the *believer's present lodging while in the body*. And there are these two or three things that I remark about it, which I find in the text and context.

1. then, I find it is called a *house* in the first verse of this chapter. And it is fitly so called, because of its rare and curious structure and workmanship: Psal. cxxxix. 14, 15. 'I will praise thee, for I am fearfully
' and wonderfully made; marvellous are thy works,
' and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance
' was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret;
' and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the
' earth.'

‘earth.’ The body of man is a wonderful piece of architecture, and the skill and wisdom of the great Creator is wonderfully discovered therein: it is set up, as it were, by line and rule, in such exact order, that the most curious piles and edifices in the world are but a chaos or mass of confusion, when compared therewith. Take a clod of dust, and compare it with the flesh of man, unless we were instructed of it before hand, we would not imagine it to be one and the same matter, considering the beauty and excellency of the one above the other; which evidently proclaims the being, power, and wisdom of the great Creator, who ‘made us, and not we ourselves,’ and who can sublimate matter above its first original.

2. I remark concerning the believer’s present lodging, that however curious its structure be, yet it is but a house of earth; therefore called in the first verse, an ‘earthly house.’ And it is so, especially in a three-fold respect.

1st, In respect of its original; it is made of earth. It is true, all the elements meet in the body of man, fire, earth, water, and air; but earth is the predominant. And therefore, from thence he is said to have his rise: Job iv. 19. ‘He dwells in houses of clay, and his foundation is in the dust.’ Whatever be the beauty, strength, structure, or high pedigree of men; yet as to their bodies, they claim no higher extract than the dust of the earth.

2^{dly}, It is a house of clay, in respect of the means that support it; it stands upon pillars of dust; for the corn, wine, and oil, wherewith the body of man is maintained, do all spring out of the earth. Hos. ii. 21, 22. God is said to ‘hear the heavens,’ the heavens

to 'hear the earth,' the earth to 'hear the corn, wine, 'and oil,' and these 'to hear Jezreel'. And if these props be withdrawn, how soon will the clay-tabernacle fall to the ground, and return to its original !

3dly It is a house of earth in respect of its end; it returns thither at its dissolution. Accordingly see that of God to Adam, Gen. iii. 19. 'Dust thou art, 'and unto dust shalt thou return.' Perhaps there may be some allusion unto these three in that passionate exclamation of the prophet Jeremiah to the rebellious Jews, Jer. xxii. 29. 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the 'word of the Lord.' They were earth in their original; they were earth as to their support, and they would return unto earth in the end.

3. I remark concerning the believer's present lodging, that it is but at best a tabernacle. So it is called, verse 1. 'If our earthly house of this tabernacle 'were dissolved;' and again here, 'We that are in 'this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.' Now, a tabernacle or a tent is a moveable or portable kind of habitation, and is peculiar especially to two sorts of men. 1. Unto travellers or wayfaring men. 2. To soldiers or warfaring men.

1st, I say, Tabernacles or tents, they are peculiar to strangers or warfaring men. Strangers, especially in the eastern countries, they used to carry these portable houses about with them, because of the inconveniencies which they were exposed to. Hence, Heb. xi. 9. it is said of Abraham, that 'by 'saith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in 'a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with 'Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same 'promise,' They dwelt in tabernacles, because they
had

had no present inheritance; they were but strangers, and passengers in the country. To this the apostle probably alludes here. And so this intimates to us, that the saints of God, while in the body, they are pilgrims and strangers, not as yet arrived at their own country: 'I am a stranger in the earth,' says the Psalmist, Psalm cxix. 19. and it is said of the scripture worthies, Heb. xi. 13. that they 'confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth;' they 'desired a better country, that is, an heavenly.' O believer, thou art not a residenter, but only a passenger through this valley of Baca; and therefore study a disposition of soul suitable to thy present condition.

2dly, Tabernacles, as they were used by strangers and wayfaring men, so by soldiers and warfaring men, who are obliged frequently to flit their camps from one place to another. Believers, while they are in the tabernacle of the body, must act the part of soldiers, fight their way to the promised land, through the very armies of hell. 'We wrestle not' (says the apostle) 'against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,' Eph. vi. 12. And therefore, as the apostle exhorts, it concerns us, to 'put on the whole armour of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, the girdle of truth;' and to be frequently accustoming ourselves to a holy dexterity in wielding and managing 'the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God,' that so we may be able to make a courageous stand in the day of battle, and at last come off the field

field in a victorious manner, when Christ the Captain of salvation shall sound the retreat at death. Thus the believer's lodging in a tabernacle, shews him to be both a traveller and a soldier.

4. Another thing that I remark concerning the believer's lodging, is, that it is but a tottering and crazy house, that is shortly to be taken down; for, says the apostle, verse 1. 'The earthly house of this tabernacle' is to be 'dissolved. What man is he (says the Psalmist) 'that liveth, and shall not see death? 'shall he deliver his soul from the band of the grave?' Psalm lxxxix. 48. This king of terrors has erected his trophies of victory over all that ever sprung of Adam. The greatest Cæsars and Alexanders, who made the world to tremble with their sword, were all forced at last to yield themselves captives unto this grim messenger of the Lord of hosts. There is no discharge of this warfare; the tabernacle of the body must dissolve. However, it may be ground of encouragement to the believer, that death is not a destruction or annihilation: no, as the apostle tells, it is only a dissolving, or taking down of the tent or tabernacle; for God designs to set up this tabernacle again at the resurrection, more glorious than ever. It was the faith of this that comforted and encouraged Job under his affliction, Job xix. 25, 26. 'I know that 'my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the 'latter day upon the earth. And though after my 'skin, worms destroy this body, and though my reins 'be consumed within me,' (says he,) 'yet in my flesh 'shall I see God.' So much for the *first* thing in the method.

II. The

II. The *second* thing proposed was to *speake a little of the believer's burdens while in this tabernacle.* This earthly house, it lies under many servitudes, and the believer (as one says) pays a dear mail or rent for his quarters. For,

1. The clay-tabernacle itself is many times a very heavy burden to him. The crazy cottage of the body is liable to innumerable pains and distempers, which make it lie like a dead weight upon the soul, whereby its vivacity and activity is exceedingly marred. When the poor soul would mount up, as upon eagle's wings, the body will not bear part with it. So that the believer feels the truth of Christ's apology verified in his sad experience, 'The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak'

2. Not only is he burdened with a burden of clay, but also with a burden of sin: I mean indwelling corruption, the secret Atheism, enmity, unbelief, ignorance, pride, hypocrisy, and other abominations of his heart. O but this be a heavy burden, which many times is like to dispirit the poor believer, and press him through the very ground. David (though a man according to God's own heart, yet) cries out under this burden, 'Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults,' Psal. xix. 12. And the apostle Paul never complained so much of any burden as of this, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!' To be rid of this burden, the poor believer many times would be content that this clay-tabernacle were broken into shivers.

3. He is burdened many times with a sense of much actual guilt, which he has contracted through
the

the untenderness of his way and walk. Conscience, that deputy of the Lord of hosts, (being supported by the authority of the law), frequently brings in a heavy indictment against the poor soul, and tells it, Thus and thus thou hast sinned, and trampled upon the authority of God the great Lawgiver. In this case the believer cannot but take with the charge, and own, with David, ' Mine iniquities are gone over mine head : as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me,' Psal. xxxviii. 4. ; and, Psal. xl. 12. ' Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up : they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me.'

4. He is sometimes sadly burdened with the temptations of Satan. The devil, that cunning archer, he shoots at him, and sore wounds and grieves him. Sometimes whole showers of fiery darts dipt in hell are made to fly about his ears. God, for holy and wise ends, suffers the believer to be winnowed, sifted, and buffeted by this enemy. And O but the believer be sore burdened in this case ! Sometimes he is ready to conclude with David, One day or other I shall fall by this roaring lion, that goes about seeking to devour me : sometimes he is brought to his wits end, saying, with Jehoshaphat in great extremity, when surrounded by enemies, ' I know not what to do, but mine eyes are towards thee.' But let not the believer think strange of this, seeing Christ himself was not exempted from the molestations of this enemy.

5. Sometimes the believer is burdened with the burden of ill company. The society of the wicked, which perhaps is unavoidable, is a great incumbrance

to him, and tends mightily to mar and hinder him in his work and warfare. Hence David utters that mournful and melancholy complaint, Psal. cxx. 5. 6. 'Wo 'is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the 'tents of Kedar,' &c. The believer is of Jacob's disposition, with reference to the wicked, Gen. xlix. 6. 'O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto 'their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.' And truly, Sirs, if the company and society of the wicked be not your burden, it is a sign ye are of their society.

6. Sometimes the believer is sadly burdened, not only with his own sins, but with the abounding sins and abominations of the day and place wherein he lives. 'I beheld the transgressors,' says David, 'and 'was grieved. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes : 'because they keep not thy law,' Psal. cxix. 136. 158. O what a heart-breaking thing is it to the poor soul, to see sinners dashing themselves to pieces upon the thick bosses of God's buckler, and, as it were, upon the Rock of salvation, running headlong to their own everlasting ruin, without ever reflecting upon their ways ! His very bowels yearn with pity towards them, who will not pity themselves. Upon this account believers are frequently designed the 'mourn- 'ers in Zion :' they 'sigh and cry for all the abomi- 'nations that be done in the midst of Jerusalem,' Ezek. ix. 4.

7. The believer is many times, while in this tabernacle, burdened with the public concerns of Christ. He is a person of a very grateful and public spirit. Christ took a list of him while he was in a low state ; and therefore he cannot but be concerned for the concerns

cerns of his kingdom and glory, especially when he sees them suffering in the world. When he beholds the boar out of the wood, or the wild beast of the forest, open and avowed enemies, wasting and devouring the church of God; when he sees the foxes spoiling the tender vines, and the watchmen wounding, smiting, or taking away the veil of the spouse of Christ, Song v. 7.; when he sees the privileges of the church of Christ invaded, her doctrine and worship corrupted, her ordinary meals retrenched by the stewards of the house: these things, I say, are sinking and oppressing to his spirit; he then hangs his harp upon the willows, when he remembers Zion. In this case he is 'sorrowful for the solemn assembly,' and 'the reproach of it' is his 'burden,' Zeph. iii. 18.

8. The poor believer has many times the burden of great crosses and afflictions lying upon him, and these both of a bodily and spiritual nature, and *deep* many times *calletb unto deep*; the deep of external trouble calls to the deep of inward distress; and these, like two seas meeting together, do break upon him with such violence, that the waters are like to come in unto his very soul. Sometimes, I say, he has a burden of outward troubles upon him; perhaps a burden of sickness and pain upon his body, whereby the crazy tabernacle of clay is sore shattered: 'There is 'no soundness in my flesh,' says David, 'because of 'my sin,' Psal. xxxviii. 3. Sometimes he is burdened with poverty, and want of the external necessities of life; which needs be no strange thing, considering that the Son of God, the heir of all things, became poor; and so poor, that, as he himself declares, 'The
foxes

'foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests;
 'but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.'
 Sometimes he is burdened with infamy and reproach,
 malice and envy striking at his reputation, and wound-
 ing his name. 'False witnesses,' says David, 'rose
 'up against me; they laid to my charge things that
 'I knew not,' Psal xxxv. 11. Sometimes he is bur-
 dened in his relations, as by their miscarriages. It
 was a grief of heart to Rebekah, when Esau married
 the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, Gen. xxvi 34. 35.
 And no doubt David had many a sad heart for the
 miscarriages of his children, particularly of Am-
 non and Absalom. Sometimes he is burdened with
 the death of near relations. It is breaking to him
 when the Lord takes away the desire of his eyes with
 a stroke. I might here tell you also of many trials and
 distresses of a more spiritual nature, that the believer
 is exercised with, besides these already named. Some-
 times he has the burden of much weighty work lying
 on his hand, and his heart is like to faint at the pro-
 spect of it, through the sense of his own utter inability
 to manage it, either to God's glory, or his own com-
 fort, or the edification of others; such as, the work
 of his station, relation, and generation, and the great
 work of his salvation. This lies heavy upon him,
 till the Lord say to him, as he said to Paul in ano-
 ther case, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.' Some-
 times the believer in this tabernacle is under the bur-
 den of much darkness. Sometimes he is in darkness
 as to his state; he walks in darkness, and has no light,
 insomuch that he is ready to raze the foundation, and
 to cry, 'I am cast out of thy sight: the Lord hath
 'forfaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me,' 16.
 xlix.

xlix. 14. Sometimes he is in darkness as to his duty, whether he should do or forbear; many a perplexing thought rolls in his breast, till the Lord, by his word and Spirit, say to him, 'This is the way, walk ye in it,' Is. xxx. 21. Sometimes he is burdened with distance from his God, who seems to have withdrawn from him behind the mountains; and in this case he cries, with the church, 'For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye, runneth down with water, because the Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me,' Lam. i. 16. And sometimes it is a burden to him to think, that he is at such a distance from his own country and inheritance; and in this case he longs to be over Jordan, at the promised land, saying, 'I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ; which is best of all, Phil. i. 23. Sometimes again he is under the burden of fear, particularly the fear of death. Heb. ii. 15. we read of some who are held in bondage all their life through fear of death; and yet, glory to God, such have had a safe landing at last.

Thus I have told you of some of these things where-with the believer is burdened, while in the tabernacle of this body.

III The *third* thing in the method was, to *speake of the believer's groaning under his burden*: for, says the apostle, *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened*. Upon this head I shall only suggest two or three considerations.

1. Consider, that the working of the believer's heart, under the pressures of these burdens, vents itself variously. Sometimes he is said to be in heaviness:

ness: 1 Pet. i. 6. 'If need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations.' Sometimes he is said to sigh under his burdens, and to sigh to the breaking of his loins: he is said to fetch his sighs from the bottom of his heart: 'My sighing cometh before I eat,' says Job. Sometimes his burdens make him to cry. Sometimes he cries to his God, Psal. cxxx. 1. 'Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.' Sometimes he cries to bystanders and onlookers, as Job did to his friends, 'Have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me,' Job xix. 21.; or, with the church, Lam. i. 12. 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me, in the day of his fierce anger.' Sometimes he is said to roar under his burden: 'My roarings,' says Job, 'are poured out like the water. I have roared all the day long,' says David, 'by reason of the disquietness of my heart.' Sometimes he is at the very point of fainting under his burden: 'I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.' Sometimes his spirits are quite overset and overwhelmed: Psal. lxi. 2. 'From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.' Sometimes again he is as it were distracted, distracted and put out of his wits, through the weight of his burdens, especially when under the weight of divine terrors. Thus it was with holy Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. 15. 'While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted.' Yea, sometimes the matter is carried so far, that it goes to the drinking

ing up of the very spirits, and a drying and withering of the bones; as ye see in the case of Job, 'The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.' O the heavy tossings of the believer's heart under his burdens! the apostle here expresses it by *a groaning*: 'We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.'

2. For clearing this, ye would know, that there are three sorts of groans that we read of in scripture. 1st, Of groans of nature. 2^{dly}, Of groans of reason. 3^{dly}, Of groans of grace.

I say, we read of groans of nature, Rom. viii. 22. 'We know,' says the apostle, 'that the whole creation groaneth, and travaileth in pain together until now.' Man, by his sin, brought a curse upon the good creatures of God, 'Cursed is the ground for thy sake, Gen. iii. 17. And the very earth upon which we tread groans, like a woman in travail, under the weight of that curse and vanity that it is subjected unto through the sin of man; and it longs, as it were, to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and to share of the glorious liberty of the sons of God, at the day of their manifestation.

2^{dly}, We read of groans of reason, or of the reasonable creatures under their affliction. Thus we are told, that the children of Israel groaned under the weight of their affliction in Egypt, by reason of the heavy tasks that were imposed upon them: Exod. vi. 5. 'I have heard,' says the Lord, 'the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage.'

3^{dly}, We read of groans of grace, or of spiritual groans,

groans, Rom. viii. 26. 'The Spirit helpeth our infirmities:—and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' And of this kind, we conceive, are these groans which the apostle speaks of in our text; they are not natural, neither are they merely rational groans, (though even these are not to be excluded), but they are gracious and supernatural, being the fruit of some saving work of the Spirit of God upon the soul. And therefore,

3. A *third* remark I offer is this, that these groans of the gracious soul here spoken of, seem to imply, as was hinted at in the explication of the words, (1.) A great deal of grief and sorrow of spirit on the account of sin, and the sad and melancholy effects of it on the believer, while in this embodied state. (2.) It implies a displeasure, or dissatisfaction in the believer, with his present burdened estate; he cannot find rest for the sole of his foot hereaway: he finds that this is not his resting place. And, (3.) It implies a breathing and panting of soul after a better state, even the immediate enjoyment of God in glory, vers. 1. he 'groans' with an 'earnest desire to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven.'

IV. But I proceed to the *fourth* thing in the method, which was the *application* of the doctrine. And the *first* use shall be of *information*.

1. Hence we may see the vast difference between heaven and earth. O what vast odds is there between the present and future state of the believer, between his present earthly lodging, and his heavenly mansion! This world is but at best a *weary land*: but there is no wearying in heaven: no;
' They

' They shall serve him day and night in his holy temple.' This world is a land of darkness, where thou ' goest' many a time ' mourning without the sun : ' but when once thou comest to thine own country, ' the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy ' God thy glory.' This world is a land of distance ; but in heaven thou shalt be at home : when ' absent ' from the body, thou shalt be ' present with the ' Lord.' This world is a ' den of lions,' and a ' mountain of leopards ; ' but there is no lion or leopard there ; ' they shall not hurt nor destroy in all' God's ' holy mountain' above. This world is a land of thorns ; many pricking briers of affliction grow hereaway ; but no pricking brier or grieving thorn is to be found in all that country above. This world is a polluted land, it is defiled with sin ; but ' there can ' in no wise enter into' the land of glory, ' any thing ' that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a ' lie.' In a word, there is nothing but matter of groaning for the most part here ; but all ground of groaning ceaseth for ever there.

2. See hence a consideration that may contribute to slay or allay our griefs, sobs, and groans, for the death of godly relations ; for while in this tabernacle they ' groan, being burdened : ' but now their groans are turned into songs, and their mourning into *hallelujahs* ; for ' the ransomed of the Lord,' when they ' return,' or ' come to Zion,' at death or the resurrection, it is ' with songs, and everlasting joy upon ' their heads : they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing flee away,' Is. xxxv. 10. And therefore, let us ' not sorrow, as them that have no ' hope.' If our godly friends that are departed, could entertain

entertain converse with us, they would be ready to say to us, as Christ said to the daughters of Jerusalem, O ' weep not for us, but weep for yourselves ;' for we would not exchange conditions with you for ten thousand worlds : ye are yet groaning in your clay-tabernacle, oppressed with your many burdens ; but as for us, the day of our complete redemption is come, our heads are lifted up above all our burdens, under which, once in a day, we groaned while we were with you.

3. See hence, that they are not ay the happiest folk that have the merriest life of it in the world. Indeed, if we look only to things present, the wicked would seem to have the best of it ; for, instead of groaning, ' they take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the ' sound of the organ ; they spend their days in wealth' and ease, Job xxi. 12. 13. But, O Sirs, remember, that it is the evening that crowns the day. ' The ' triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of ' the hypocrite but for a moment : ' whereas the groanings of the righteous are but short, and their jubilee and triumph shall be everlasting. ' Mark the perfect ' man,' says David, ' and behold the upright : for the ' end of that man is peace. But the transgressors ' shall be destroyed together, the end of the wicked ' shall be cut off,' Psal. xxxvii. 37. I will read you a word that will shew the vast difference betwixt the godly and the wicked, and discover the strange alteration of the scene betwixt them in the life to come, Is. lxxv. 13. 14. ' Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, ' my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry : behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty : ' behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed :

'shamed : behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.'

4. See hence, that death needs not be a terror to the believer. Why? Because, by taking down this tabernacle, it takes off all his burdens, and puts a final period to all his groans. Death to a believer, is like the fiery chariot to Elijah; it makes him drop the mantle of his body with all its filthiness, but it transports his soul, his better part, into the mansions of glory, 'the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

The *second* use of the doctrine may be of *reproof* unto two sorts of persons.

1. It reproves those who are at home while in this tabernacle. Their great concern is about this clay-tabernacle, how to gratify it, how to beautify and adorn it; their language is, 'Who will shew us any good? What shall we eat? what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed?' But they have no thought or concern about the immortal soul which inhabits the tabernacle, which must be happy or miserable for ever. O Sirs! remember, that whatever care ye take about this clay-tabernacle, it will drop down to dust ere long, and the noisome grave will be its habitation, where worms and corruption will prey upon the fairest face, and purest complexion. Where will be your beauty, strength, or fine attire, when the curtains of the grave are drawn about you?

2. This doctrine serves to reprove these who add to the burdens and groans of the Lord's people, as if they were not burdened enough already. Remember that it is a dreadful thing to vex or occasion the grief of

of these whom the Lord has wounded: they that do so, they counteract the commission of Christ from the Father, who was 'sent to comfort them that mourn 'in Zion, to give them the oil of joy for mourning, 'the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.' But on the contrary they study to give a heavy spirit, and to strip and rob them of their garments of praise. Remember that Christ is very tender of his burdened saints; and if any offer to lay a load above their burden, by grieving or offending them, the Lord Jesus will not pass it without a severe resentment; and 'it 'were better for' such 'that a millstone were hanged 'about their neck, and that they were drowned in the 'depth of the sea.'

A *third* use shall be of *lamentation* and *humiliation*. Let us lament, that the Lord's saints and people should have so much matter of groaning at this day and time wherein we live. And I will tell you of several things that are a burden unto the spirits of the Lord's people, and help on their groaning, and make them sad hearts.

1. The abounding profanity and immorality of all sorts that are to be found among us. O how rampant is Atheism and profanity; and impiety, like an impetuous torrent, carrying all before it! It is become fashionable among some to be impious and profane. Religion, which is the ornament of a nation, is faced down by bold and petulant wits: it is reckoned, by some, a genteel accomplishment, to break a jest upon the Bible, and to play upon things religious and sacred.

O what cursing and swearing! O what lying and cheating! what abominable drunkenness, murders and uncleanness! what perjury and blasphemy, is the

land defiled with ! We may apply that word, Hof. iv. 3. ' For these things the land mourns.' The land groans at this day under these and the like abominations. And therefore, no wonder that the hearts of those that regard the glory of God do groan under them also, and cry with the prophet, Jer. ix. 1. 2. ' O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.

2. The universal barrenness that is to be found among us at this day, is matter of groaning unto the Lord's people. God has been at great pains with us both by ordinances and providences: he has planted us in a fruitful soil; he has given us a standing under the means of grace; he has given us *line upon line, precept upon precept*: and yet, alas! may not the Lord say of us, as he said of his vineyard, Is. v. 2. ' I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.' And as for the fruit of providences, alas! where is it? Mercies are lost on us; for when God feeds us to the full, when he gives peace and plenty, then, Jeshurun like, we *wax fat and kick* against him, Deut. xxxii. 15. And as mercies, so rods and afflictions are lost upon us likewise: God has ' stricken us, but we have not grieved; ' he has ' consumed us, but we have refused to receive correction, Jer. v. 3.

3. The lamentable divisions that are in our Reuben occasion great thoughts of heart, and heaviness to the
 Lord's

Lord's people, at this day. Court and country, church and state, are divided : ministers divided from their people, and people from their ministers ; and both ministers and people divided among themselves ; and every party and faction turning over the blame upon the other : than which there cannot be a greater evidence of God's anger, or of approaching ruin and desolation ; for ' a city, or kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand,' Matth. xii. 25.

4. The innumerable defections and backslidings of our day are a great burden to the Lord's people, and make their hearts to groan within them. The charge which the Lord advanceth against the church of Ephesus, may too justly be laid to our door, that we are ' fallen from our first love.' There is but little love to God or his people, little zeal for his way and work, to be found among us ; the power of godliness, and life of religion, is dwindled away into an empty form with the most part.

I might here take occasion to tell you of many public defections and backslidings that we stand guilty of before the Lord ; particularly, of the breach of our solemn national engagements. It was once the glory of our land to be married unto the Lord by solemn covenant, in a national capacity ; but, to our eternal infamy and reproach, it has been both broken and burnt by public authority in this very city. Perhaps indeed some may ridicule me, for making mention of the breach of our solemn engagements ; but I must blow the trumpet as God's herald, ' whether ye will hear, or forbear.' And ye who ridicule these things now, will perhaps laugh at leisure, if

God shall send a bloody sword, or raging pestilence; to avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

But some may say, Ye talk of breach of solemn national engagements; but wherein does the truth of such a charge appear?

For answer, I shall instance in a few particulars. It is fit that we not only know, wherein our fathers have broken this covenant; but wherein ourselves, this present generation, stands guilty.

1. then, In our national covenant we swear, that we will endeavour to be humbled for our own sins, and for the sins of the kingdom. But, alas! public days of fasting and humiliation for the sins of the land are but rare, and thin sown at this day. Where are the mourners of our Zion? How few are they whose hearts are bleeding for the abounding wickedness of the day? If God shall give a commission to the men with the slaughter-weapons to go through Scotland, and slay utterly old and young, only come not near any that sigh and cry; O what a depopulate country would it be! how few inhabitants would be left in the land!

2. In that covenant, we are bound to go before one another in the example of a real reformation. But, alas! who makes conscience of this part of the oath of God? How little personal reformation is there? how little care to have the heart purified from lusts and uncleanness? so that the Lord may well say unto us, as he said to Jerusalem, 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness: how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?' How little reformation of life? what a scandalous latitude do many professors of religion take to themselves, in cursing, swearing, lying, drinking,

drinking, cheating, and over-reaching others in their dealings, whereby the way of religion comes to be evil spoken of?

3. By the covenant we engage, not only to reform ourselves, but our families. But, alas! how little of this is to be found? How little care is taken by many parents and masters, to have their children and servants (after the example of Abraham) instructed in the good ways of the Lord? Every head of a family should be a priest in his family, for maintaining the worship of God in it: but, alas! how many are there that either scruff over the duty in a superficial manner, or else live in the total neglect of it? Go through many noblemen and gentlemens families in the kingdom, and ye shall find as little of the worship of God in them, as if they were Turks and Pagans, and perhaps less. Yea, Atheism is become so rife among people of higher rank, that, with some, he is not reckoned a man of any spirit, that will bow a knee to God in his family.

4. In our national covenant we swear to endeavour the reformation of England and Ireland from the remains of the Roman hierarchy, and ceremonies of man's invention in the worship of God. But how is this article performed, when, by solemn treaty, the representatives of the nation, in a parliamentary capacity, have consented, that Episcopacy should continue as the form of worship and government in our neighbour nation? Again, by the covenant we swear to endeavour the extirpation of Popery: and yet how many masses are kept openly in the land, particularly in the northern parts of the kingdom? how many trafficking priests and Jesuits are swarming among us?

and how many professed Protestants are there, who have of late shown their good-will to sacrifice a Protestant interest unto the will of a Popish Pretender? Again, in our national covenant, we abjure Prelacy and tyranny in our church-government: but though Prelatic tyranny be not established, yet there is too much of a Prelatic spirit venting itself among us at this day, while many are laying claim to a negative voice, in radical judicatories, over these whose offices gives them equal interest in the government of the church with themselves. And there is but too much tyranny exercised over the Lord's people by many judicatories of the church, while men are thrust in upon them, to take the charge of their souls, contrary to their own free choice and election. Christ's little ones are but too little regarded, if the world's great ones be gratified. On which account many of the Lord's people are crying at this day with the church, Cant. v. 7. 'The watchmen that went about the city, found me, they smote me, they took away my vail from me.' Again, in our covenant we abjure superstition in worship; and yet to the scandal of our holy religion, it is not only tolerate by public authority, but greedily gone after by many in our land. Heresy and error is abjured by the covenant, every doctrine inconsistent with the word of God, and our Confession of faith; and yet all sorts of errors are tolerate, except rank Popery, and blasphemy against the Trinity. It is true, the standard of our doctrine (blessed be God) remains pure; but it is to be lamented, there is not so much zeal discovered in curbing error, as our covenant-vows do engage us to. Again in our covenant we abjure malignants, that is to say,
enemies

enemies to a covenanted work of reformation, as being no members of our church, and consequently as having no right to the privileges thereof; and yet malignant lords and lairds are the men who are generally gratified in the affair of planting churches, in opposition unto them that fear God, and who, on all occasions, discover their love and regard for a covenanted work of reformation. Again, in the covenant we swear against a detestable neutrality and indifferency in the cause of God and religion; and yet how many Gallio's are there among us who are indifferent whether the interest of Christ sink or swim? And does it not discover too much of a lamentable lukewarmness and indifferency of spirit about the way and work of God, when we are beginning to abridge the ordinary number of our sermons at our solemn gospel-festivals, and to diminish the solemnity thereof, which has been so remarkably owned of God? What else is this, but a snuffing at his ordinances, and saying practically, 'What a weariness is it?' Mal. i. 13. Sirs, whatever some may think of the matter, yet I know that the hearts of many of the Lord's people 'are sorrowful,' even unto groaning, 'for the solemn assembly.' I shall not say, that what is now transacted of late, with relation to this matter, is a breach of our national covenant; but I say, it seems to be a sad evidence of the lukewarmness of our spirits about the way and work of God. And I find, that a 'changing of the ordinances,' and a 'breaking of the everlasting covenant,' go together in scripture, 1s. xxiv. 5.

I might have told you of many other things that break and burden the spirits of the Lord's people at this

day; particularly, of the removing of the righteous by death; which, as it is a great and heavy judgment in itself, so it is an ordinary forerunner of some heavy calamity approaching: Is. lvii. 1. 'Merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.' And I suppose there may be many hearing me, whose hearts are inwardly groaning to this day, for the removal of that eminent light *, which shined with such a refreshing lustre from this pulpit among you so many years. It bodes ill to our Zion, when such watchmen are called off from her walls, as, on all occasions, were ready to blow the trumpet upon the approach of any danger from earth or hell. But I pass this use, and go on to

A *fourth* use of the doctrine, which shall be in a word to two sorts of persons.

First, A word to you who are not burdened in this tabernacle. Ye never knew what it was to groan, either for your own sins, or for the sins of the land wherein you live, or the tokens of God's anger, which are to be found among us; these are things of no account with them, they can go very lightly and easily under them. All I shall say to you, shall be comprised in these two or three words.

1. It seems the adamant and nether millstone ye carry in your breast, was never to this day broken by the power of regenerating grace. And therefore, I may say to you, as Peter said to Simon Magus, 'Ye are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 23.' Ye are under the slavery of Satan, and the curse of the law, and wrath of God;

* Mr. James Webster.

God; and these are heavy burdens, whether ye feel them or not.

2. Know it for a certainty, that, except mercy and repentance interpose, your groaning time is coming. However ye make light of sin now, and of things serious and sacred; yet ye will find them to be sad and weighty things when death is sitting down upon your eye-lids, when your eye-strings are breaking, and your souls taking their flight into another world. O 'what will ye do in the day of visitation? to whom will ye flee for help? and where will ye leave your glory?' H. x. 3. When ye are standing trembling pannels before the awful bar of the great Jehovah, will ye make light of sin then? Or will ye make light of it, when, with Dives, ye are weltering among the flames of hell? O 'consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.' Whether do ye think it is better to groan a while in this tabernacle under the burden of sin, or to groan for ever under the weight of God's vengeance, while an endless eternity endures?

Secondly, A second sort I would speak a word unto, are poor, broken, and burdened believers, who are groaning under the weight of these burdens I mentioned. I only offer two or three things for your encouragement, with which I shall close; for we are to comfort them that mourn in Zion.

1. Know for thy comfort, poor believer, that thy tender-hearted Father is privy to all thy secret groans; though the world know nothing about them, he hears them. 'Lord,' says David, 'all my desire is before

' thee : and my groaning is not hid from thee,' Psalm xxxviii. 9. As he puts thy tears in his bottle, so he marks down thy groans in the book of his remembrance.

2. As the Lord hears thy groans, so he groans with thee under all thy burdens : for ' he is touched with ' the feeling of our infirmities ;' and ' in all our afflictions he is afflicted.' He has the bowels of a father unto his children : Psalm ciii. 13. ' As a father ' pitieth his children : so the Lord pitieth them that ' fear him.' Yea, his heart is so tender toward thee, that it is compared to the tender affection of a mother to her sucking child. And therefore,

3. Know for thy encouragement, that thou art not alone under thy burdens. No : ' The eternal God is ' thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.' He bears thee and thy burdens both : and therefore though thou may ' pass through the fire and water ;' yet ' the fire shall not burn thee, the waters of adversity shall not overwhelm thee.'

4. Know for thy comfort, that whatever be thy burden, and however heavy thy groanings are, there is abundant consolation provided for thee in God's covenant. And here I might go through the several burdens of the Lord's people, and offer a word of encouragement to you under each. I shall only touch them passingly.

1st, Art thou burdened with the body of clay ? Perhaps thy clay-cottage is always like to drop down every day ; and this fills thee with heaviness. Well, believer, know for thy comfort, that, ' if the earthly ' house of this tabernacle were dissolved,' thou hast ' a ' building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal

‘ternal in the heavens.’ There are mansions of glory prepared for thee there, where thou shalt be for ever with the Lord.’

2dly, Art thou burdened with a burden of sin, crying, ‘O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’ Well here is comfort, believer, thy ‘old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed.’ Ere long he will present thee to his Father, ‘without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.’

3dly, Art thou burdened with the sense of much actual guilt? Art thou crying, with David, ‘Mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me?’ Well, but consider, believer, ‘God is faithful to forgive thee:’ for he has said, ‘I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.’

4thly, Art thou burdened with the temptations and fiery darts of Satan? Well, but consider, believer, Christ thy glorious head, the true ‘seed of the woman,’ he has bruised the head of the old serpent; through death he has destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ And as he overcame him in his own person, so he will make thee to overcome him in thy person ere long: ‘The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly’.

5thly, Is the society of the wicked thy burden? Art thou crying, ‘Wo is me, that I sojourn in Me-
‘sech?’ Why, consider, that thou shalt get other company ere long; when thou puttest off this clay-tabernacle, thou shalt enter in among ‘the spirits of just
‘men

'men made perfect.' Only stand thy ground and be not conformed to the world.

6thly, Art thou burdened with the abounding sins and backslidings of the day and generation wherein thou livest? Well, be comforted, God's mark is upon thee as one of the mourners in Zion; and, in the day when the man with the slaughter-weapon shall go through, God will give a charge not to come near any upon whom his mark is found: Thou shalt be hid in 'the day of the Lord's anger.'

7thly, Art thou burdened with the concerns of Christ, with the interests of his kingdom and glory? Is thy heart, with Eli's, 'trembling for fear of the ark of the Lord,' lest it get a wrong touch? Know, for thy encouragement, that 'the Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations;' and that, though 'clouds and darkness be round about him,' yet 'righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne,' and 'mercy and truth shall go before his face.' Though 'his way be in the whirlwind,' and 'his footsteps in the great waters,' yet he carries on the designs of his glory, and his church's good. And as for thee that art 'sorrowful for the solemn assembly, to whom the reproach of it is a burden,' God will *gather* thee unto himself: he will gather thee unto the 'general assembly, and church of the first-born.'

8thly, Art thou burdened with manifold afflictions in thy body, in thy estate, in thy name, in thy relations? Know for thy comfort, God is carrying on a design of love to thee in all these things: 'Thy light afflictions, which are but for a moment,' will 'work for thee a far more exceeding and eternal weight

‘weight of glory.’ See a sweet prophecy for thy comfort, *Is. liv. 11, 12.*

9thly, Art thou burdened with much weighty work? Perhaps thou knowest not how to manage this and the other duty; how to adventure to a communion-table, or the like. Well, for thy encouragement, poor soul, the Lord ‘sends none a warfare upon their own charges.’ And therefore look to him, that he may bear thy charges, out of the stock that is in thy elder brother’s hand; and ‘go in his strength, making mention of his righteousness.’

10thly, Art thou under the burden of much darkness, crying, with Job, ‘Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him?’ &c. *Job xxiii. 8.* Well, be comforted; for ‘unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. Unto you that fear my name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.’ And therefore say thou with the church, *Mic. vii. 9.* ‘He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.’ Again,

11thly, Art thou burdened with the Lord’s distance from thy soul, ‘because the Comforter that should relieve thy soul, is far from thee?’ *Lam. i. 16.* Well, be comforted, ‘He will not contend for ever,’ he has promised to return, *Is. liv. 7, 8.* The Lord cannot keep up himself long from the poor soul that is weeping and groaning after him; as we see in Ephraim, *Jer. xxxi. 18.* &c. Again,

12thly, Art thou burdened with the fear of death? Know for thy comfort, the sting of death is gone, and it cannot hurt thee: *Hos. xiii. 14.* ‘I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them

‘them from death: O death, I will be thy plague;
‘O grave, I will be thy destruction.’

Lastly, Art thou burdened with the death of the righteous, particularly with the loss of faithful ministers? Well, be encouraged, that though the Lord take away an Elijah, yet the Lord God of Elijah lives, and ‘the residue of the spirit’ is still with him. And therefore take up David’s song, and sing, ‘The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock: and let the God of my salvation be exalted.’



The

The believer exalted in imputed righteousness.

A

SERMON preached at the celebration of the
LORD's supper at Largo, Sabbath morning, June
4. 1721.

Is. xlv. 24, 25. Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have
I righteousness and strength: even to him shall men
come, and all that are incensed against him shall be
ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be
justified, and shall glory.

P R E F A C E.

THE subject of the following discourse is high, noble,
and excellent. But my design at that time, being
only to preface a little before the action-sermon, by that
eminent and worthy servant of Christ, Mr. William Mon-
crief, I took care to abridge my thoughts upon it as much
as possible. I have since handled the same text, in my
ordinary, at far greater length. But the discourse having
been quarrelled, as was hinted in the preface to that on
Rev. iii. 4. I judged it fit to send it abroad, in the ve-
ry same dress in which, to the best of my remembrance,
it was delivered. It is not accuracy of stile or method
I set up for, but the edification of the poor, to whom the
gospel is preached; and therefore shall contend with
none

none upon those heads. But as for the doctrines here delivered, if I durst not hazard my own salvation upon the truth of them, I had never adventured to preach them as the truths of God to others. I am fully persuaded, that one great reason why the gospel has so little success in our day, is, because our discourses generally are so little calculated for pulling down our own, and exalting the righteousnesses of Christ, as the alone foundation which God hath laid in Zion. Our sermons lose their savour and efficacy for salvation, if this be wanting: and I humbly think the great apostle Paul was of this mind, Rom. i. 16, 17. I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. And if any ask, Whence comes the gospel to have such power to salvation? He immediately answers, For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.

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P S A L. lxxxix. 16.

In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

THE Psalmist, in the beginning of this psalm, having run out at a great length in the praise and commendation of the God of Israel, he comes, from the 15th verse of the psalm, to declare the happiness of his Israel, or of true believers, of whom Israel according to the flesh were a type.

Now, God's Israel are a happy people upon several accounts. 1. Because they are privileged to 'know
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‘the joyful sound,’ in the beginning of the 15th verse. The gospel has a joyful sound; a sound of peace, a sound of life, a sound of liberty and salvation. You are all privileged to hear this sound with your bodily ears; but the great question is, If you do know it, understand it, and give faith’s entertainment to it? Alas! Isaiah’s lamentation may but too justly be continued, with respect to the greatest part of the hearers of the gospel, ‘Who hath believed our report?’ 2. God’s Israel are a happy people, because they ‘walk in the light of his countenance,’ in the close of the 15th verse. They are privileged with the special intimations of his love, which puts more gladness in their hearts, than when corn, wine, and oil doth abound. 3. Whatever discouragement they may meet with from the word, yet still they have ground of rejoicing in their God: ‘In thy name shall they rejoice all the day;’ and, ‘Thanks be unto God,’ says the apostle, ‘who always causeth us to triumph in Christ.’ 4. Their happiness is evident from this, that they are dignified and exalted above others, by the immaculate robe of a surety’s righteousness; as you see in the words of my text, ‘In thy righteousness shall they be exalted.’

In which words briefly we may notice, 1. The believer’s promotion; he is *exalted*. In the first Adam we were debased unto the lowest hell, the crown having fallen from our heads: but in Christ, the second Adam, we are again exalted; yea, exalted as high as heaven, for we ‘sit together with him in heavenly places,’ says the apostle. This is an incredible paradox to a blind world, that the believer, who is sitting at this moment upon the dunghill of this earth, should

should at the same time be sitting in heaven in Christ his glorious head and representative; and yet it is indisputably true, that we 'sit together with him in 'heavenly places,' Eph. ii. 6. Yea, in him he 'rules 'the nations with a rod of iron,' and triumphs over, and treadeth upon all the powers of hell. 2. We have the ground of the believer's preferment and exaltation; it is 'in thy righteousness.' It is not in any righteousness of his own: no; this he utterly disclaims, reckoning it but 'dung and lose, filthy rags,' dogs meat: but it is in *thy* righteousness: that is, 'the 'righteousness of God,' as the apostle calls it, Rom. i. 17. 'The righteousness which is of God by faith,' Phil. iii. 9. The righteousness of God is variously taken in scripture. Sometimes for the infinite rectitude and equity of his nature: Psalm xi. 7. 'The 'righteous Lord loveth righteousness.' Sometimes for his rectoral equity, or distributive justice, which he exerciseth in the government of the world, rewarding the good, and punishing the evil doers: Psalm xcvi. 2. 'Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.' Sometimes it is put for his veracity and faithfulness in accomplishing his word of promise, or in executing his word of threatening: Psalm xxxvi. 5, 6. 'Thy faithfulness reacheth unto 'the clouds: thy righteousness is like the great mountains.' Sometimes it is put for the perfect righteousness which Christ the Son of God as our surety and Mediator brought in, by his obedience to the law, and death on the cross, for the justification of guilty sinners: and this, as I said, is frequently called 'the 'righteousness of God:' and in this sense I understand

stand it here in the text, 'In thy righteousness shall they be exalted.'

The observation is much the same with the words themselves, namely, *That in, or by the righteousness of Christ, believers are exalted*. Or thus, *Whatever honour or happiness believers are exalted to, the righteousness of Christ is the ground and foundation of it*. It is all owing to the complete obedience, and meritorious death of the ever-blessed surety. This is the foundation which God hath laid in Zion, upon which all our happiness in time and through eternity is built.

I have not time now to adduce parallel texts of scripture for the confirmation of this doctrine, neither can I stand upon a long prosecution of it, considering what great work you have before you through the day. All I shall do, shall be only,

I. To offer a few propositions anent this righteousness, that you may understand both the nature and necessity of it.

II. Give you a few of its properties, to clear its excellency.

III. Speak a little of the believer's exaltation by virtue of this righteousness.

IV. Apply.

I. For the *first* thing, to offer a few propositions anent this righteousness, for clearing its nature and necessity.

1. then, You would know, that God, having made man a rational creature, capable of moral government, he gave him a law suited to his nature, by which he

was

was to govern himself in the duties he owed to God his great Creator. This law was delivered to man in the form of a covenant, with a promise of life upon the condition of perfect obedience, and a threatening of death in case of disobedience, Gen. ii. 17. Thus stood matters between God and man in a state of innocency.

2. Adam, and all his posterity in him, and with him, having broken the covenant, are become liable to the curse, and penalty of it; so that our salvation is become absolutely impossible, until justice be satisfied, and the honour of the broken law be repaired. The law and justice of God are very peremptory, and stand upon a full satisfaction and reparation, otherwise heaven's gates shall be shut, and eternally barred against man and all his posterity. The flaming sword of justice turns every way, to keep us from access unto the paradise that is above.

3. While man in these circumstances was expecting nothing but to fall an eternal sacrifice unto divine justice, the eternal Son of God, in his infinite love and pity to perishing sinners, steps in as a Mediator and surety; offering not only to take our nature, but to take our law-place, to stand in our room and stead: whereby the whole obligation of the law, both penal and preceptive, did fall upon him; that is, he becomes liable and obliged both to fulfil the command, and to endure the curse of the covenant of works, which we had violated. And here, by the way, it is fit to advertise you, that it was an act of amazing grace in the Lord Jehovah, to admit a surety in our room; for, had he stood to the rigour and severity of the law, he would have demanded a personal satisfaction, without

without admitting of the satisfaction of a surety : in which case Adam, and all his posterity, had fallen under the stroke of avenging justice through eternity. But glory to God in the highest, who not only admitted of a surety, but provided one, and laid help upon one that is mighty.

4. Christ, the eternal Son of God, being, in ' the fulness of time, made of a woman,' and ' made under the law,' as our surety, he actually, in our room and stead, fulfilled the whole terms of the covenant of works ; that is, in a word, he obeyed all the commands of the law, and endured the curse of it, and thereby brings in a complete law-righteousness, whereby guilty sinners are justified before God. And this is the righteousness by which we are exalted. By his active and passive obedience, he ' magnifies the law,' and ' makes it honourable,' and the Lord declares himself to be ' well pleased for his righteousness sake.'

5. Although Christ obeyed the law, and satisfied justice, and thereby brought in an everlasting law-righteousness for a whole elect world ; yet the elect of God are never exalted by virtue of this righteousness, till, in a day of power, they be brought to receive it by faith, and submit to it for justification before God. We disclaim that Antinomian error, of an actual justification from eternity, or yet of a formal justification, bearing date from the death of Christ. We own indeed, with all Protestant sound divines, that it was the purpose of God to justify his elect from eternity, and that all the elect were represented by Christ in his obedience unto the death ; but that they are actually justified before conversion, or before their application by faith unto the blood of
Jesus,

Jesus, is impossible ; because the sentence of the broken law stands always in force against them, till they actually believe in the Son of God ; for ‘ he that believeth not, is condemned already.’ And how can they be both justified and condemned at the same time? Till then, they are ‘ children of wrath, even as others.’

6. This righteousness of the surety is conveyed unto us by imputation ; as is abundantly plain from many places of scripture, particularly Rom. iv. 6. 11. 12. 23. 24. God reckons what the surety did in our room unto us : so that his righteousness becomes as much ours for justification before God, as though we had obeyed the law, and satisfied justice in our own person. Now, this imputation of the surety’s righteousness runs principally upon these two or three things. (1.) Upon the eternal transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein the Son of God was chosen and sustained as the surety of an elect world. Then it was that he gave bond to the Father, to pay their debt in the red gold of his blood, saying, ‘ Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire :—Lo, I come :—I delight to do thy will.’ (2.) It is grounded upon the actual imputation of our sins unto him : ‘ The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.’ There is a blessed exchange of places between Christ and his people : he takes on our sin and unrighteousness, that we may be clothed with the white robe of his righteousness : 2 Cor. v. 21. ‘ He was made sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ (3.) This imputation goes upon the ground of the mystical union between Christ and the believer. When the poor soul is determined

terminated in a day of power to embrace the Lord Jesus in the arms of faith, Christ and he do that very moment coalesce into one body. He becomes a branch of the noble vine; a member of that body whereof Christ is the glorious head of eminence, influence, and government. And being thus united to Christ, the long and white robe of the Mediator's righteousness is spread over him, whereby he is not only freed from condemnation, but for ever sustained as righteous in the sight of God: 1 Cor. i. 30. 'But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

II. The *second* general head was, to offer a few properties of this righteousness in which believers are exalted, from whence its excellency will appear.

1. then, It is an every way perfect and spotless righteousness: and how can it be otherwise, seeing it is the righteousness of God? So perfect is it, that the holy law is not only fulfilled, but *magnified* and *made honourable* thereby, Is. xlii. 21. So perfect is this righteousness, that the piercing eye of infinite justice cannot find the least flaw in it: yea, justice is so fully satisfied therewith, that God speaks of the soul who is clothed therewith, as though it were in a state of innocence, and perfectly freed from sin: 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee. He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel.' Indeed he beholds many spots in the believer, considered in himself; but not a spot is in him, considered as under the covert of this spotless righteousness.

2. It is a *meritorious* righteousness. 'The redemption of the soul is' so 'precious,' that it would have 'ceased for ever,' unless it had been redeemed by this righteousness; for silver and gold, and such corruptible things, could never do it. Lay heaven, and all the glories thereof, in the balance with this righteousness, they would be all light as a feather, compared with it. Heaven is called a *purchased inheritance*, and this righteousness is the price that bought it. There is such merit in it, that it expiates sins of the blackest hue, and redeems a whole elect world from wrath and ruin. Yea, such is the intrinsic value of it, that, had it been so designed, it was sufficient to have redeemed the whole posterity of Adam, yea, ten thousand worlds of angels and men, upon a supposition of their existence and fall. O with what confidence then may a poor soul venture its eternal salvation upon this bottom!

3. It is an *incomparable* righteousness. There is no righteousness among the creatures that can be compared with it. Compare it with our own righteousness by the law, and the apostle Paul will tell us, that he reckoned his Pharisaical righteousness before conversion, yea, his own obedience after conversion, but as *dung*, when laid in the balance with it, Phil. iii. 8. Compare it with Adam's righteousness in a state of innocence, or yet with the righteousness of the spotless angels, they are but like glow-worms when compared with this sun: the one is but the righteousness of a creature, but here is the righteousness of God.

4. It is a *soul-beautifying* and *adorning* righteousness: M. lxi. 10. 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
' my

‘my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.’ The poor soul, that was black by ‘lying among the pots,’ when clothed with this robe, shines ‘as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.’

5. It is an *everlasting* righteousness, as the prophet David calls it, chap. ix. 24. Indeed this righteousness had no being, save in the purpose and promise of God, till Christ actually appeared in our nature, and satisfied the commands of the law, and demands of justice: however, upon that very being that it had in the purpose and promise of God, it became effectual for the justification of all the old-testament saints. This righteousness, then, I say, is an everlasting righteousness, both as to the contrivance and duration of it. The contrivance of it bears date from the council of peace in the ancient years of eternity; for the surety was ‘set up from everlasting.’ And as it is everlasting in its root, so also in its fruit; for upon this righteousness the saints will stand and be assoilzied at the day of judgment: and upon this bottom they will have their standing in heaven through eternity. The song of the redeemed for ever will be, ‘He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.’

6. It is a *soul dignifying* and *exalting* righteousness. Solomon, Prov. xiv. 34. speaking of equity in the administration of justice, says, that even that kind of righteousness ‘exalteth a nation.’ I am sure this

holds true of the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus, as you see in my text, 'In thy righteousness shall they be exalted.' But this leads to

III. The *third* thing in the method, which was, to *speak of the believer's exaltation by virtue of this righteousness.* And here I will very briefly shew, 1. What evils it exalts him above. 2. What happiness and dignity it exalts him to.

First, What evils it exalts him above.

1. It exalts him above the law as a covenant of works; yea, above both the commanding and condemning power of that covenant. 'Ye are not under the law,' says the apostle, 'but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14. And if they be not under it, it follows that they are exalted above it. Indeed they are not, and cannot be above it as a rule of duty: no creature can be dispensed from the obligation of yielding obedience to the laws of the great Creator; and the believer, in a peculiar manner, is bound to obey the law of a Creator, in the hand of a Mediator. But considering the law as a covenant of works, demanding the debt of obedience as a condition of life, or threatening eternal wrath in case of disobedience, the believer is indeed exalted above it by the righteousness of Christ. And if the law at any time attempt to bring the believer in bondage to it, he is to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. The bond-woman Hagar, with her offspring of legal fears and terrors, are cast out by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. iv. 30. If a believer in Christ shall hear the thunderings and curses of mount Ebal, or Sinai, he has no reason to be affrighted; for Christ by his righteousness

ousness hath redeemed from the curse of the law. 'Thou art not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest:—but thou art come unto mount Sion,—and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.' The believer is dead to the law by the body of Christ, being married unto a better husband, even him that is raised from the dead.

2. By this righteousness the believer is exalted above the world. Rev. xii. 1. the 'woman clothed with the sun,' has 'the moon under her feet;' which may not only point at the believer's duty to soar heavenward in his affections, but also his privilege in Christ, to trample both upon the frowns and flatteries of this lower world; according to that of the apostle, 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.'

3. By this righteousness he is exalted above the power and malice of Satan. Indeed as long as the believer is on this side of Jordan, the devil will be harassing him with his fiery darts, and do his utmost to make him go halting to heaven; but by virtue of this righteousness, namely, the doing and dying of our ever-blessed surety, the devil is both disarmed and destroyed. The head of the old serpent is bruised; for, 'through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' And by faith in the blood and obedience of the Lord Jesus, the believer treads Satan under his feet; they 'overcome' him 'by the blood of the Lamb.'

4. By this righteousness the believer is exalted a-

bove death. Perhaps thou art in bondage through fear of death; thy heart is like to faint and fail thee, when thou lookest to the swellings of this Jordan. But take a view of this righteousness, and thou shalt be exalted above the fears of it; for although thou be liable to the stroke of death, yet by this righteousness thou art freed from the sting of it. What is the sting of death? It is sin. Now, Christ he has 'finished transgression, and made an end of sin,' by 'bringing in everlasting righteousness.' And therefore thou mayst roll that word like a sweet morsel under thy tongue, Hos. xiii. 14. 'I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.'

5. By this righteousness the believer is exalted above all accusations, from whatever airth they may come, Rom. viii. 33. There the apostle gives a bold challenge, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?' The challenge is universal in respect of all accusers: as if he had said, Is there any in heaven, earth, or hell, that can accuse them? It is universal in respect of all the accused; for the whole elect of God are comprehended, among whom there have been as great sinners as ever breathed on God's earth. And it is universal in respect of all crimes: it is not said, Who shall lay this, or that, or the other crime to their charge? but, 'any thing?' and what can be more comprehensive? Now, what is the ground of this bold challenge? It is grounded on the righteousness of Christ: for, says the apostle, 'It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It

' is

‘is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,’ &c.

Secondly, I come to shew what happiness or dignity the believer is exalted to by virtue of this righteousness. And, in so many words, I only name these two or three particulars.

1. He is exalted by it unto a state of peace and reconciliation with God: Rom. v. 1. ‘Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.’ God for ever lays aside every grudge in his heart against the soul that is clothed therewith.

2. They are exalted by this righteousness unto a state of sonship. Christ was ‘made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,’ Gal. iv. 4. 5.

3. Unto a state of fellowship and familiarity with God, and access to him with holy confidence and boldness: Heb. x. 19. 20. 21. 22. ‘Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God: let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith.’ Heb. iv. 14. 16. ‘Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God,—let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.’ The believer may come, under the covert of this righteousness; with as great freedom unto God as his Father in Christ, as ever Adam could have done in a state of innocence.

4. At last thou shalt be exalted to a state of endless glory. For heaven (as I was hinting before) is the purchase

purchase of the obedience and death of Christ; and faith acted on this righteousness and satisfaction, is 'the path of life,' by which we enter into these 'rivers of pleasures,' and that 'fulness of joy' which is 'at God's right hand for evermore.'

IV. The *fourth* thing was the *application* of the doctrine. And my *first* use shall be of *information*, in these few particulars.

1. Is it so, that in a surety's righteousness believers are exalted? then see hence, that whatever account the world may make of them, as the dross and off-scouring of the earth, yet they are dignified persons in God's reckoning: 'Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.'

2. See hence, that the believer has no ground of boasting. Why? Because it is not in his own, but in Christ's righteousness, that he is exalted: 'Boasting is excluded,' says the apostle. 'By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith,' Rom. iii. 27. If it were by our own doings or obedience that we were exalted, we would have something to boast of: but since it is in his righteousness that we are exalted, we have nothing whereof to glory in ourselves. There are three questions that the apostle asks, which may silence all flesh, and put all boasters to an eternal blush, 1 Cor. iv. 7. 'Who maketh thee to differ? What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?' Let believers themselves pose their souls with these or the like inquiries, when pride begins to arise in their breasts.

3. See hence what obligation we lie under to the Lord

Lord Jesus; who, although he was the great Lawgiver, yet was content to be made under the law; though he was the Lord of life, yet humbled himself unto the death, to bring in that righteousness by which we are exalted. He was content to be numbered among the transgressors, that we might be counted among the righteous; he was content to become sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God; content to become a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might rest upon us. O admire this love, which 'passeth knowledge.'

4. See hence a noble antidote against a spirit of bondage unto fear. What is it that thou fears, O believer? Indeed if thou sin, thou mayst fear the rod of a Father; for 'he will visit thy transgression with the rod, and thine iniquity with stripes.' But art thou afraid of vindictive wrath? There is no ground for this, Luke i. 74. he has 'delivered us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear;' that is, without all servile or slavish fear of wrath. Art thou afraid of the tempests of mount Sinai? There is no ground for that, for the storm brake upon the head of thy surety; and therefore thou mayst sing and say, as Is. xii. 1. 'Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away.' Art thou afraid lest thou be refused access unto the presence chamber? Improve this righteousness by faith, and thou shalt see that the way to the holy of holiest is opened, and get the banner of love displayed over thee. Whenever the poor believer takes the righteousness of the surety in the hand of faith, and holds it up unto God as a ransom of his own finding, he is so well pleased with it, that his frowns are turned

into smiles. In a word, you shall never get rid of a spirit of bondage, till you learn by faith to improve this law-biding righteousness; and then indeed legal fears and terrors do vanish, like the darkness of the night before the rising of the sun.

Use second, of reproof unto all those who are seeking to exalt themselves by a righteousness of their own, like the Jews, Rom. x. 3. who 'went about to establish their own righteousness,' and 'would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God.' There are some of the hearers of the gospel, who exalt themselves in a negative righteousness: they are not so bad as others; they are free of gross out-breakings, being no common drunkards, swearers, or Sabbath-breakers; and therefore conclude that all is right with them. But, Sirs, the Pharisee could make this brag: and Paul before conversion could say, that 'touching the law' he was 'blameless;' and yet when God opened his eyes, he found himself lying under the arrest of justice; for 'when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died.' Others are exalting themselves in a moral kind of righteousness; they not only cease to do evil, but do many things that are materially good: they are sober, temperate, just in their dealings, liberal to the poor, good peaceable neighbours; they love every body, and every body loves them; they keep the commandments as well as they can: and this is the ground they are standing upon. But I may say to you, as Christ said to the young man, who told him, 'All these things have I kept from my youth up, Yet lackest thou one thing?' O what is that? say you. I answer, it is to be brought off from that rotten bottom of a covenant

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nant of works that ye are standing upon. Ye want to see that ye are spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, and that ye are legally dead, condemned already, and the wrath of God abiding on you. Ye want to see, that 'all your own righteousness is as filthy rags,' and to be made to say, with the church, 'Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Others will go further than bare morality; they will abound in the duties of religion, read, hear, pray, communicate, run from sermon to sermon, from sacrament to sacrament; and upon these things they rest. All these things are good in their proper place; but if you build your hope of acceptance here, you are still upon a covenant of works bottom, seeking righteousness, 'as it were by the works of the law;' and while you do so, you do but seek the living among the dead. All your works are but dead works, till you be in Christ; and they will but stand for cyphers in God's reckoning, till you be brought to submit to this righteousness, by which alone guilty sinners can be exalted. Others rely upon a mixed kind of righteousness: they will freely own, that their duties and performances will never exalt them into favour and acceptance with God; but, O say they, it is Christ and our duties, Christ and our prayers, he and our tears and repentance, that must do it. But believe it, Sirs, Christ and the idol of self will never cement; these old rotten rags will never piece in with the white and new robe of the righteousness of the Son of God: and if you adventure to mingle them together, 'Christ shall profit you nothing,' Gal. v. 2. 3. 4. Others again, they will pretend to renounce all their works and duties, and own with their mouths, that it is by faith

in Christ only that they hope to be accepted : but though they own this with their mouth, yet still their hearts cleave fast unto a covenant of works ; they were never ‘ through the law, dead to the ‘ law :’ and when nothing else will do, they will make their own act of believing the righteousness on which they lean for acceptance ; which is still a seeking righteousness in themselves : whereas, if ever we be justified before God, we must have it in the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘ In him’ will we ‘ be ‘ justified,’ and ‘ in him alone’ will we ‘ glory.’ Faith carries the soul quite out of itself ; yea, faith renounces its own act in the point of justification. All these, and many other rooms and lying refuges, hath the devil and our own hearts devised, to lead us off from Christ. But, O Sirs, believe it, these are but imaginary sanctuaries, and the hail will sweep them away. Nothing but the doing and dying of the surety, apprehended by faith, will ever exalt you into favour and fellowship with God, or acquit you from the curse and condemnation of the broken law. And unless ye betake yourselves to the horns of this blessed altar, to this refuge of God’s appointing, you are undone ; and you may read your doom, *Is. l. 11.* ‘ Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, ‘ that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk in ‘ the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye ‘ have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye ‘ shall lie down in sorrow.’

Use third, of trial. Is it so, that in Christ’s righteousness we are exalted ? O then, Sirs, try if you be really exalted by this righteousness.

There is the more need to try this now, that you
are

are to approach the table of the Lord. This righteousness is the wedding-garment, without which you cannot be welcome guests. And if you adventure to meddle with the symbols of Christ's body and blood without it, you may expect that the Master of the feast will say to you, 'Friend, how camest thou in hither, 'not having a wedding garment?' For your trial, I offer these two or three things.

1. Hast thou seen thyself condemned by the law or covenant of works? Every man by nature is condemned already, while out of Christ. Now, the ordinary way that God takes of bringing an elect soul into Christ, and under the covering of his righteousness, is by discovering unto him the sentence of condemnation that he is under by virtue of the broken law; and thus paves the way towards his acceptance of Christ as 'the Lord our righteousness:' for thus it is that 'the law is our schoolmaster, to lead us 'unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith. The Lord leads the sinner to mount Zion by the foot of Sinai: the Spirit's way is, first to 'convince of sin,' and then 'of righteousness.'

2. Has the Lord discovered the surety and his righteousness to thee? and has thy soul found rest here? Perhaps the law and its curses, justice and wrath, were pursuing thee; and thou couldst not find a hole wherein to hide thy head, 'all refuge failed.' At length the Lord drew by the vail, and discovered his righteousness as a sufficient shelter, saying, 'Turn ye to the 'strong hold, ye prisoners of hope.' And thither thou fled, as unto a city of refuge, saying, 'This is 'my rest, here will I dwell.' Readily, when it comes to this, there is a little heaven of serenity and joy enters

ters into the soul ; so that, if it were possible, it would make heaven and earth to ring with Hallelujahs of praise upon God for his unspeakable gift. Does thou not know, O believer, something of this, to thy sweet experience ? This says, that in his righteousness thou art exalted.

3. When an arrow of conviction is at any time shot by the hand of God into thy conscience, whereby thy peace and quiet is disturbed, whither does thou run for ease and relief ? The man that is married to the law, he runs unto the law for relief and ease : the law is the thing that heals him ; his prayers, his tears, his reformation, is that which stops the mouth of his conscience. But as for the believer, he can never find rest on this side of the blood of sprinkling ; he gets his healing only from under the wings of the Sun of righteousness. No other balm will give him ease, but ' the balm of Gilead ; ' and no other hand can apply it, but ' the physician there.'

4. If you be exalted by imputed righteousness, you will be the real students of gospel-holiness. It is a gross perverting of the gospel, and a turning of the grace of our God into wantonness, for folk to pretend, that they are justified by the merit of Christ, while they are not at the same time concerned to be sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Sanctification, or freedom from the power and dominion of sin, is a part, and no small part, of that salvation which Christ has purchased by his obedience and death : Tit. ii. 14. ' Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us ' from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar ' people, zealous of good works.' Justification and sanctification go always hand and hand. He who is
made

‘made of God unto us righteousness,’ is also ‘made
 ‘sanctification;’ we are ‘justified and sanctified in
 ‘the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our
 ‘God.’ Try yourselves then by this, whether you be
 exalted by this righteousness. Are you delivered
 from the reigning power of sin? at least, is it so far
 broken, that it is become your burden, under which
 you groan, saying with the apostle, ‘Wretched man
 ‘that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of
 ‘this death?’

Use *fourth* shall be of *consolation* and *encouragement*
 to believers, who are exalted in this righteousness.
 By virtue of it, O believer, thou art intitled unto e-
 very thing that possibly thou canst stand in need of.
 Whatever grace or mercy thou wants, thou shalt have
 it, if thou do but improve this law-biding righteouf-
 ness. Wants thou pardoning grace, to take away the
 guilt of sin? That is one of the gifts of God, through
 the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith; for
 ‘he is set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in
 ‘his blood, to declare his righteousness for the re-
 ‘mission of sins.’ Wants thou to have thy peace with
 God confirmed? Improve this righteousness by
 faith; for ‘being justified by faith, we have peace
 ‘with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Wants
 thou access unto the holiest? By faith in the blood
 of Jesus have we ‘access with boldness.’ Wants
 thou medicinal grace for healing of soul-plagues?
 Improve this righteousness by faith; for ‘by his stripes
 ‘we are healed.’ Out of the side of our gospel-altar
 comes forth living water, that healeth the corrupt and
 dead sea of indwelling corruption, Ezek. xlvi. 9.
 This is the ‘the tree of life, whose leaves are for the
 ‘healing

‘healing of the nations.’ Wants thou a shadow or covering, to shelter thy weary soul from the scorching heat of divine anger, or of temptation from Satan, or tribulation from the world? Improve this righteousness, and sit down under the shadow of it; it is ‘as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.’ Wants thou courage to look the law or justice of God in the face? Here is a fund for it; for under this covering thou mayst look out with confidence, and say, ‘Who can lay any thing to my charge?’ Wants thou to have the new covenant confirmed to thy soul? Improve this righteousness by faith; for Christ, by his obedience and death, ‘confirmed the covenant with many.’ His blood is ‘the blood of the new testament;’ and the soul by faith takes hold of it, the covenant of grace is that moment confirmed unto it for ever. In a word, by virtue of this righteousness thou mayst come to a communion-table, and to a throne of grace, and ask what thou wilt: our heavenly Father can refuse nothing to the younger brethren, who come to him in their elder brother’s garment. By virtue of this righteousness, thou mayst lay claim to every thing, to all the blessings of heaven and eternity. Thou didst indeed forfeit thy right in the first Adam; but the forfeiture is recovered, and the right restored to thee, upon a better ground, namely, upon the obedience and death of the second Adam; and thou comes in upon his right. May not all this then revive thy drooping spirit, and make thee take up that song in the text, ‘In thy name’ will I ‘rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness,’ will I ‘be exalted?’

The

The humble soul the peculiar favourite of
Heaven.

SERMON preached on a fast-day before the ad-
ministration of the Lord's supper at Orwell, July
27. 1721.

Job xxii. 29. *When men are cast down, then thou shalt
say, There is lifting up: and he shall save the hum-
ble person.*

1 Pet. v. 5, 6. *Be clothed with humility: for God re-
sisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.
Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand
of God, that he may exalt you in due time.*

P S A L. CXXXVIII. 6.

*Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the
lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off.*

IT is not material to inquire when, or upon what
occasion, this psalm was penned. In the begin-
ning of the psalm, the Psalmist enters upon a firm re-
solution to praise the Lord, and he lays down several
excellent grounds of praise and thanksgiving through
the body of the psalm. As,

1. He resolves to praise God for the experience he
had

had of his love and faithfulness, in the accomplishment of his gracious word of promise unto him, verse 2. 'I will praise thy name for thy loving kindness, and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.' God has a greater regard unto the words of his mouth, than to the works of his hand: heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of what he hath spoken shall never fall to the ground. Some do understand this of Christ the essential Word, in whom he has set his name, and whom he has so highly exalted, that he has given him 'a name above every name.'

2. David resolves to praise God for the experience he had of God's goodness, in hearing his prayers, verse 3. 'In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me: and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.' God granted him a speedy answer; for it was in the very day that he cried that he was heard: and it was a spiritual answer; he was 'strengthened with strength in his soul.' Would you have soul-strength for the work ye have in view? then cry unto him who is the *strength of Israel* for it; for 'he giveth power to the faint, and he increaseth strength to them that have no might.'

3. He resolves to praise God for the calling of the Gentiles, which he foresaw by the spirit of prophecy, verse 4, 5. The prosperity and enlargement of the kingdom of Christ, is what fills the believer's mouth with Hallelujahs of praise.

4. He resolves to bless God for his different ways of dealing with the humble and the proud, for his grace to the one, and his contempt and rejection of the other, in the words which I have read: 'Though
' the

‘the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly : but the proud he knoweth afar off.’

It is the first part of the verse I design to insist upon. Where we may notice,

1. The character of the gracious soul; he is a *lowly* person, one that is emptied, and abased in his own eyes. He sees nothing in himself, either to recommend him to God or man : on which account he is sometimes called ‘poor in spirit,’ Matth. v. 3. He has got something of the mind and Spirit of Jesus in him, and so has learned of him who is ‘meek and lowly,’ Matth. xi. 29.

2. We have here God’s transcendent greatness; he is the *high Lord*, or Jehovah. He is ‘the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, and who dwells in the high and holy place, to which no man can approach.’ Who can think or speak of his highness in a suitable manner? It dazzles the eyes of sinful mortal worms, to behold ‘the place where his honour dwells.’ O how infinite is the distance between him and us! ‘There are none among the sons of the mighty that can be compared unto him.’ Yea, ‘the inhabitants of the earth are before him as a drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the balance.’ He is not only *high* above men, but above angels : cherubims and seraphims are his ‘ministering spirits.’ He is ‘high above the heavens ; for ‘the heaven,’ yea, ‘the heaven of heavens cannot contain him.’ And ‘he humbleth himself’ when ‘he beholds the things that are in heaven.’ O Sirs, study to entertain high and admiring thoughts and apprehensions of the glorious majesty of God : for ‘honour and majesty are before him ; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.’

3. You

3. You have the amazing grace of this *high God*, though the distance between him and us be infinite, yet he hath a regard to the *lowly*. The apostle Peter expresseth this by 'giving grace to the humble,' 1 Pet. v. 5. God is 'good to all;' he distributes the effects of his common bounty to the good and bad, to the just and unjust: but he reserves his special grace and favour for the meek and lowly soul. What further is needful for explication, will occur in the sequel of the discourse.

Observe, That the lowly and humble soul is the peculiar favourite of the high God. Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.

This truth is so evidently founded on the text, that I shall not consume time in adducing other texts of scripture to confirm it. Many that I might name will fall in, in the prosecution of the doctrine; which I shall attempt, through grace, in the following method.

I. I shall give some account of this lowliness and humility, and shew wherein it consists.

II. Prove that the humble and lowly soul is the peculiar favourite of Heaven.

III. Why God has such respect to the lowly.

IV. Lay before you some marks or characters of the lowly and humble soul.

V. Offer some motives pressing you to seek after it.

VI. Offer a few directions or advices how it may be attained.

I. The

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to *give some account of this lowliness and humility, that ye may know wherein it consists.* Now, lowliness being a relative grace, we must consider it in a threefold view. Either, 1. As it has a respect unto ourselves. Or, 2. As it has a respect unto others. Or, 3. As it has a respect unto God.

First, I say, it may be considered with respect to ourselves. And so it implies,

1. Low and under-rating thoughts of ourselves. The humble soul has low thoughts of his own person; as David, 'I am a worm, and no man. I am less than the least of thy mercies,' says Jacob. He has low thoughts of his pedigree: he is not like the princes of Zoan, that valued themselves on this, that they were 'the offspring of antient kings.' Some folk think there is none like them, because they are of such a clan, and such a family, they have such lords and lairds for their relations. But 'the humble soul he makes little account of all these: 'Who am I,' says David, 'and what is mine house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?' He considered himself as the degenerate plant of a strange vine; as a rotten branch of the corrupted and fallen family of Adam: he views the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit whence he was digged, saying, as in Psalm li. 5. 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity: and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Again, the man has low thoughts of his own abilities for any work or service he is called to in his generation. O, says the lowly soul, I see I am nothing, I can do nothing; I cannot of myself think a good thought. 'I am not sufficient of myself to think any thing as of myself,' says

says Paul. I cannot read, hear, pray, communicate, meditate, or examine myself: I see such sin and imperfection attending every duty I set about, as may justly provoke a holy God to cast it back like dung upon my face: I am sure 'my goodness extendeth 'not to him.' I see I cannot subdue one corruption, or resist the least temptation, when left to myself; I fall before it, and must needs be carried down the stream like a dead fish, unless the Lord's grace be sufficient for me. Again, the man has low thoughts of his attainments, whether moral or evangelical. O, says Agur, 'I am more brutish than any man, and 'have not the understanding of a man. I neither 'learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.' And Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, he did not reckon that he had attained, or that he was already perfect; but he forgets those things which were behind, reaching forth unto things that were before, Phil. iii. 12, 13.

2. This lowliness and humility with respect to ourselves, has in it a self-abhorrence; which is yet a degree beyond the former. The man sees so much sin and guilt, so much emptiness, poverty, and vileness about himself, that, with holy Job, he cries out, 'Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' Agreeable unto which is that, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. 'Ye shall remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.'

3. It has in it a singleness of heart in the discharge of duty, without vain-glory, or Pharisaical ostentation.

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It argues a proud hypocritical spirit, to pray, or give alms, or do any duty, to be seen of men, that we may procure a vogue to ourselves, or the approbation of others. I am afraid, there are many that attend sermons and sacraments, with a design to maintain their credit and reputation among their neighbours. Verily, such have their reward; but a sorry one it is, when they have got it: the day comes, when this fig-leaf covering shall be torn, and your nakedness, emptiness, and hypocrisy, exposed before men and angels. The humble and lowly Christian will make conscience of duty, although none in the world should see him; yea, the more retired he is, he loves it the better: he cares not though, in things of this nature, his left hand did not know what his right hand doth.

Secondly, This lowliness and humility, considered with respect unto others, has these things in it.

1. A preferring of others above or before ourselves. Agreeable unto this is the apostolical command, Phil. ii. 3. 'Let nothing be done through strife, or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.' Not that a child of God should think a profane reprobate in a better state than himself; but every true child of God will see so much in himself, as will make him ready to think the worst reprobate as good, or rather better than he is by nature; and he will see, that the least of saints have something wherein they do excel him. This was the disposition of the great apostle, he looked on himself as the chief of sinners, and the least of all saints.

2. A looking upon the gifts and graces of others without a grudge. He will not say, This or that man
darkens

darkens me: no; he rejoices to see the gifts and graces of God's Spirit abounding toward others: 'Would God' (says Moses) 'that all the Lord's people were prophets.' And then he will shun all vain comparison of himself with others: he will not say, 'Stand by, for I am holier than thou;' or, with the proud Pharisee, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican.' No, he rather sinks in his own esteem, when he looks on others, as Agur did, Prov. xxx. 2.

3. It has in it an affable, courteous carriage toward all, 1 Pet. iii. 8. Religion does not countenance a sullen, morose, and haughty carriage; no, on the contrary, we are expressly commanded to be 'gentle, shewing all meekness, unto all men.'

Thirdly, This lowliness and humility of soul may be considered with reference unto God. And so it implies these things following.

1. High and admiring thoughts of the Majesty of God. When God discovers himself, the man sinks into nothing in his own esteem. O, will the humble soul say, with Moses, Exod. xv. 11. 'Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?'

2. A holy fear and dread of God always on his spirit; especially in his immediate approaches unto the presence of God, in the duties of his worship. Says he, The very angels cover their faces with their wings before him, crying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts;' how then shall I, a man of polluted lips, take his holy name into my mouth? This makes him, with the publican, to smite upon his breast;

breast; to stand afar off, crying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' That is the language of the humble soul, which you have, Psal. xv. 1. 'Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?' and Psal. xxiv. 3. 'Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place?'

3. It has in it an admiring of every expression of the divine bounty and goodness toward men in general, and toward himself in particular. O, says he, 'what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?' and, 'Who am I, that thou hast brought me hitherto? Is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can I say more?' as David. And what more can be said? *for praise is silent for thee, O God, in Sion.* A silent admiration of the grace and condescension of the great Jehovah, is the highest degree of praise we can win at in this life, while our harps are so mistuned by sin.

4. It has in it a giving God the glory of all that we are helped to do in his service. When the man wins to discharge duty in any measure comfortably, he will not sacrifice to his own net, nor burn incense to his own drag; he will not, like proud Jehu, say, *Come, and see my zeal for the Lord.* No, that is not the way of the humble soul; he knows that he has all from the Lord, and therefore he will give the glory unto him, saying, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name' be the 'glory.' 'I laboured' (says Paul) 'more abundantly than all' the rest of the apostles; 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. By the grace of God I am what I am.'

5. It has in it a silent resignation unto the will of God, and an acquiescence in the disposals of his providence, let dispensations be never so cross to the inclinations of flesh and blood. *Here am I*, (will the poor soul say, with David), 'let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.' The man sees awful sovereignty in the dispensation, which makes him to say, 'Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' He sees, that his furnace is not by the ten thousandth part so hot as his sins deserve: and therefore silences his soul, with the church, saying, 'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. He sees, that the cup put into his hand, is far from the bitterness of that cup that was put into the hand of Christ; and this makes him say, 'If these things were done in the green tree, what shall be done' to such a 'withered' stick as I am? and therefore I will even be *dumb with silence* before him, not opening the mouth, because it is the Lord that doth it.

6. Although all these things I have named be the ingredients and concomitants of true humility; yet I think the very soul and essence of gospel-humiliation lies in the soul's renouncing of itself, going out of itself, and going in to, and accepting of the Lord Jesus Christ as its everlasting all; as the all of its light, life, strength, righteousness, and salvation. And I think, that a man never passes the verge of moral humility, till self-righteousness be dethroned, till the high and towering imaginations of the man's own righteousness by the law be levelled by the mighty weapons of the gospel, and he brought to submit un-
to

to the righteousness of God for justification, which is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith.

In a word, the humble and lowly believer is content to be nothing, that Christ may be *all in all* unto him: content to be a fool, that Christ may be his only wisdom; content to be, as he really is in himself, a guilty condemned criminal, that Christ may be his only righteousness; content to be stript of his filthy rags, that he may be clothed with a borrowed robe. O, says the humble soul, 'Surely in the Lord alone ' have I righteousness and strength: in him' will I ' be justified, and in him' alone will I ' glory, 1st. xlv. 24. 25. ' Yea doubtless,' (says humble Paul) ' I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the ' knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord:—and do count ' them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in ' him, not having mine own righteousness, which is ' of the law, but that which is through the faith of ' Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,' Phil. iii. 8. 9. And so much for the *first* general head, namely, the nature of this lowliness.

II. The *second* thing proposed was, to ' shew that ' the lowly and humble soul is the peculiar favourite ' of Heaven.' This will be abundantly evident, if we consider,

1. That when the Son of God was here in our nature, he shewed a particular regard unto such. Ye have a clear instance of this in the centurion, Matth. viii. 8. The centurion there addresses Christ in behalf of his servant, who was grievously tormented of the palsy; Christ, in the 7th verse, promises to come to his house and heal him. Well, see the lowliness of

the man's spirit, vers. 8. 'Lord,' says he, 'I am not ' worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.' And what a large commendation Christ gives to the man, you see in vers. 10. 'I have not found so great faith, ' no not in Israel.' And vers. 13. he grants him all that he asked, 'go thy way, and as thou hast believed, ' so be it done unto thee.' The same we see in the Syrophenician woman, Matth. xv. 27. The lowliness and humility of her spirit made her to sit with all the repulses she met with. When Christ calls her a dog, she takes with it, saying, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog,* and shall be content if I may but have a crumb, the dog's portion. And what follows on this? 'O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as ' thou wilt.' Thus, I say, Christ, in the days of his flesh, discovered the greatest regard unto the humble: and is the same now in a state of exaltation, that he was in a state of humiliation.

2. When God gives the grace of humiliation, it is a sign that he intends more grace for that soul: 1 Pet. v. 5. 'He giveth grace to the humble.' Ye know men use to lay up their richest wines in their lowest cellars; so God he lays up the richest treasures of his grace in the heart of the humble and lowly. And hence it comes, that the humble Christian is ordinarily the most thriving and growing Christian. The humble valleys laugh with fatness, when the high mountains are barren; so the humble Christian is made fat with the influences of Heaven, when lofty towering professors are, like the mountains of Gilboa, withered and dry, because the dew and rain of the graces and influences of the Spirit are suspended from them.

3. Honour,

3. Honour, exaltation, and preferment is intended for the humble soul: 'Before honour is humility,' says Solomon. Pſal. cxiii. 7. 8. 'He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill: that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.' They shall be as it were his ministers of state, that shall attend his throne, and have place among them that stand by.

4. God's eyes are upon the humble. Indeed the eye of his omniscience beholds all the children of men; but his countenance beholds the humble and upright soul: Is. lxvi. 1. 2. 'Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? for all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, said the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.' The humble soul is the object of his peculiar love and care: 'The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in their behalf.'

5. Not only God's eye, but his ear is toward the lowly soul: Pſal. x. 17. 'Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear.' Would you have preparation for a communion table? Would you be brought unto God's seat, and have a hearing there? Then come with lowliness and humility of soul.

6. The great Jehovah, the infinite God, he dwells in and with the humble: Is. lvii. 15. 'Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy

‘ place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to ‘ revive the heart of the contrite ones’. God has a twofold palace where he dwells ; the one is in heaven, the other is the heart of the humble Christian. He says of the humble soul, as he said of Zion, ‘ This is ‘ my rest for ever : here will I dwell, for I have desired it.’ And for what end will he dwell in the heart of the humble ? It is to revive and comfort them. The new wine of the consolations of God, which are not small, shall be poured into the heart of the lowly soul. He will ‘ comfort them that mourn in Zion,’ he ‘ will give them the oil of joy for mourning, and the ‘ garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.’

7. As God dwells with the humble, so the humble shall dwell with God in glory for ever : Matth. v. 3. ‘ Blessed are the poor in spirit, (which is the same with the lowly spirit) : ‘ for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’ They shall sit not only at his by-table here below, but be admitted to sit down at the high table of glory, and to eat and drink with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yea, with the King of glory himself. It is the humble that surround the throne above, as you see, Rev. iv. ; they take their crowns off their heads, and cast them down before the Lamb, saying, ‘ Thou ‘ are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, ‘ and power.’ Thus you see that the humble soul is the peculiar favourite of the high God.

III. The *third* thing in the method was, to ‘ inquire ‘ why God has such a respect unto the lowly ?’

Answ. 1. God has such a respect unto the lowly, not as if this frame of soul were meritorious of any good

good at his hand, but because this is a disposition that best serves God's great design of lifting up and glorifying his free grace. What think you, Sirs, was God's design in election, in redemption, in the whole of a gospel-dispensation, and in all the ordinances thereof? His grand design in all was, to rear up a glorious high throne, from which he might display the riches of his free and sovereign grace: this is that which he will have magnified through eternity above all his other names. Now, this lowliness and humility of spirit suits best unto God's design of exalting of the freedom of his grace. It is not the legalist or proud Pharisee, but the poor humble publican, who is smiting on his breast, and crying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*, that submits to the revelation of grace. And truly I never think a man truly humbled, till he be brought so far off his law-bottom, on which he stands by nature, as to lie down like a worm at the feet of sovereign grace, heartily content to be indebted to free grace for life, righteousness, pardon, and salvation.

2. God has such respect unto the humble soul, because it is a fruit of his own Spirit inhabiting the soul, and an evidence of the soul's union with the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom alone we are accepted.

3. This is a disposition that makes the soul like Christ; and the liker that a person be to Christ, God loves him ay the better. We are told, that Christ was 'meek and lowly; he' did 'not cry, nor lift up 'nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets:' though he was 'the brightness of his Father's glory,' yet he was content to appear 'in the form of a servant; though

he was rich, yet he' was content to ' become poor, ' that we through his poverty might be rich.' Now, the humble soul being the image of Christ, who is *the express image of his Father*, God cannot but have a regard unto him.

IV. The *fourth* thing in the method was, to ' lay ' before you some marks, by which you might try, ' whether ye be among the humble and lowly, to whom God has such a regard. You have especially need to try this now, when you are to make a solemn approach unto God at his table. ' Let a man examine himself, ' and so let him eat. If you want this lowly frame of spirit, you cannot be welcome guests unto the supper of the great king.

Now, for your trial I shall suggest these things following.

I. The lowly soul is one that is many times ashamed to look up to heaven, under a sense of his own vileness and unworthiness; as we see in the poor publican, and in David, Psalm xl. 12. ' Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities ' have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to ' look up: they are more than the hairs of mine ' head, therefore my heart faileth me.' Indeed, when by faith he looks to his cautioner, and his everlasting righteousness, his mediation and intercession, he has boldness to enter into the holy of holies, and can come with boldness to the throne of grace: I say, when he *looks* to Christ, he is *not ashamed*, Psalm xxxiv. 5. But when he looks to himself, as he is in himself, he is even ashamed and confounded before the Lord, and ready to cry out with the prophet, Is. vi. 5. ' Wo is me, for I am undone, ' because

'because I am a man of unclean lips:' how shall I speak unto 'the King, the Lord of hosts?' or how shall I appear before him?

2. He is one that is many times put to wonder that God has not destroyed him. He wonders that God has kept him out of hell so long, or that he has not let loose his hand, and made an utter end of him: and therefore he is much in adoring mercy, and long-suffering patience, with the church, Lam. iii. 22. 'It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed, 'because his compassions fail not'.

3. He is one that is most abased under the receipt of the greatest mercies and sweetest manifestations. We see this in the instance of David; when God promised to build him a sure house, and gave him a promise of the Messiah to spring of his loins, the man he is not lifted up, but, on the contrary, is filled with wonder that God should stoop so far toward the like of him: 'Who am I,' says he, 'that thou hast brought me hitherto?' The nearer that the humble soul is admitted unto God, the higher that he is lifted up unto the mount of enjoyments, he falls lower and lower in his own esteem. Abraham, when admitted to plead with God on the behalf of Sodom, Gen. xviii. how does he sink into nothing in his own eyes? 'Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto 'the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.'

4. He is one that renounces the law as a covenant, and disclaims all pretensions to righteousness from that airth: 'I through the law am dead to the law, 'that I might live unto God.' O, says the man, when he looks upon the law of God in its spirituality and extent, what can I expect from that airth, but

wrath and ruin? yea, I am condemned already by the law; and if God mark iniquity according to the tenor of it, I am undone for ever: Psalm cxxx. 3. 'If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand?' So then, try yourselves by this. Has a discovery of the law of God in its spirituality made you to own and acknowledge, that all your own righteousness is but 'as filthy rags, dung and lofs?'

5. He is one that has high, raised, and admiring thoughts of Christ, and of his law-biding righteousness. As for the person of Christ, O the humble soul admires that: the lower that he falls in his own esteem, the higher doth Christ rise in his esteem. Psalm lxxiii. David there is laid so low in his own eyes, that he cries, verse 22. 'So foolish was I and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.' Well, while it is thus with him, what are his thoughts of Christ? See it, verse 25, 26. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.' My flesh and my heart faileth: but 'God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' And as for the righteousness of Christ, O how does his soul admire that, and clasp about it! O, says he, I have no works, no righteousness of mine own, to commend me to God, or wherewith to stand before him: but he is 'the Lord my righteousness;' and 'I will go in his strength, making mention of his righteousness, even of his only.'

I might give you several other marks of his lowliness of soul. I shall only name these two or three further. As,

1. He is one that looks on sin as his greatest burden,

den, saying, with David, 'Mine iniquities are gone
'over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too
'heavy for me.' And particularly indwelling corrup-
tion, the fountain of sin; O how does he mourn and
groan under that, saying, with Paul, Rom. vii. 24.
'Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from
'the body of this death?'

2. He is one that values himself least, when o-
thers value him most. O, says he, others see only
my outside; but if they saw the swarms of abo-
minations, that I see and feel in my own heart,
I would be a terror unto them. When the mul-
titude is crying 'Hosanna to the son of David,' he is
'riding, meek and lowly, upon an afs, and upon a
'colt the foal of an afs.'

3. He is one that is puffed up with the falls of o-
thers, like some, 1 Cor. v. 2. but rather the falls of
others contribute to humble and empty him the more
of himself. He sees, from the out-breakings of others,
what is in his own heart, and how much he is obliged
unto God, for restraining grace: for if the bridle were
but laid on my neck, will the humble soul say, I
would be soon carried unto the same excess of riot
with others.

4. The humble soul is one that is thankful for lit-
tle; he will not despise the day of small things: like
the woman of Canaan, he is content with the crumbs
that fall from the children's table. The humble soul
is content with a bare word from the Lord. O, says
David, 'God hath spoken in his holiness, I will re-
'joice.' He thinks much of a single word from the
Lord's mouth, and waits for it, as the servants of

Benhadad, that caught at every word that dropped from the mouth of the king of Israel.

5. The humble soul is content and desirous to know what is God's will, that he may do it. Paul is no sooner humbled, but he cries, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?' Give grace to obey, and command what thou wilt.

V. The *fifth* thing in the method was, to *offer some motives to press and recommend lowliness and humility of spirit.*

My *first* motive shall be drawn from the excellency of the grace of humility; and its excellency especially appears in two things.

1. It assimilates the soul to Christ. Men are inclined to imitate the example of the great ones of the earth; but there is the most noble pattern that ever was, even an incarnate Deity, saying, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.'

2. It is the distinguishing character of a Christian. The people of God are ordinarily called the *humble and meek of the earth.* A proud Christian is a contradiction; for pride is just an antipode to true religion. O what a difference did it put between the Pharisee and the publican! The proud Pharisee he brags God, as it were, with his good works; 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.' But the poor publican stands afar off, as if the Majesty of heaven were about to strike him dead; and yet the publican goes home to his house justified, while the other is rejected.

Mot.

Mot. 2d, Consider how reasonable this lowliness and humility of soul is. Whatever way we view ourselves, we shall find it highly reasonable. It is highly reasonable, whether we look to ourselves in particular, or the evils of the land and day wherein we live.

1. I say, take a view of thyself, man, woman, and thou shalt find ground of humiliation. For,

1st, Thou art a creature sprung of earth, whose foundation is in the dust, and cannot pretend to a higher extract than the very earth under thy feet. Hence is the exhortation of the prophet Jeremiah, 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.' Earth in thy original, earth as to the supports of nature, and shall return unto the earth in the end.

2^{dly}, Thou art not only a creature, but a frail creature, whose breath is in thy nostrils. Thou standest continually upon the brink of an endless eternity. And as there have but a few years passed over our heads since we arose out of the dust, so, ere it be long, death will sweep us off the stage; and then all our beauty, strength, stature, and other bodily excellencies, will be covered with rottenness: Is. xl. 6, 7, 8. there you see it is the cry both of heaven and earth, that 'all flesh is grass.' Solomon, giving a description of the life of man, he sums it all up in two short words, 'There is a time to be born, and a time to die.' He leaps over the intermediate distance between man's birth and his burial, as a thing that was not worthy of his notice. He is born, and then he dies. The moment of time between the womb and the tomb is so short, might he say, that it does not deserve to be named.

3^{dly}, Thou art not only a frail, but a sinful creature,

ture, wholly over-run with that lothsome leprosy, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. O Sirs, what reason have we to be humble, who have defaced the image of God, cast dirt on all the divine attributes, trampled his law and authority under our feet. The sinner has swallowed a cup of deadly poison, which will infallibly destroy him, if infinite mercy and free grace prevent not. What ground has he then to be proud? O, says the prodigal, 'I have sinned against heaven, and therefore am no more worthy to be called thy son,' or to have the room of a 'hired servant' in the family.

4thly, Thou art not only a sinful creature, but an impotent creature, that can do nothing in order to thy own help and relief. If God had not laid help upon one that is mighty, we had been all of us this day sinking under the fiery mountains of eternal vengeance and wrath. Such an impotent creature is sinful man, that as to natural things, he cannot make one hair of his head white or black, or add one cubit to his stature. And so helpless is he, as to spiritual and eternal concerns, that he can no more change the wicked habits of his heart, or the wicked ways of his life, than the Ethiopian can change his colour, or the leopard his spots.

5thly, Thou art a variable, changeable, and inconstant creature; liable to many alterations, both as to thy outward lot, and thy inward frame. The man that is in greatest esteem to-day, may have his reputation ruined by the invenomed tongue of calumny to-morrow. In a word, thy health may soon be changed into sickness, thy riches into poverty, thy strength into weakness, thy beauty into ugly deformity.

mity. And as for thee, believer, though thy state be firm like the mountains, yet thy frame is but a changeable thing. Perhaps thou may be saying with David one day, 'By thy favour my mountain stands strong;' and the next day crying out, 'I am troubled with the hiding of his countenance.' Although perhaps the candle of the Lord may be shining on thy tabernacle, yet in a little thou may be going mourning without the sun.

2. This lowly frame of spirit is highly reasonable, if we look abroad unto the world, and particularly the land wherein we live. O what great cause of deep humiliation have we this day before the Lord, when we take a view of the abounding profanity of our day! All ranks have corrupted their ways; a flood of Atheism and wickedness, Jordan-like, has broke down all its banks. Have we not reason to be humbled for the universal barrenness that is to be found amongst us, under the drop of the glorious gospel? May not the Lord say to us, as he said of his vineyard, Is. v. 'I planted thee in a fruitful soil; I took all imaginable pains upon thee, by ordinances, by the rod, by mercies and crosses; yet, after all, when I looked that they should bring forth grapes, behold, they brought forth wild grapes?' Again, have we not reason to be humbled for the lamentable divisions that are to be found among us? 'Ephraim against Manasseh, Manasseh against Ephraim, and both they together against Israel.' Because of 'the divisions of Reuben' there are 'great thoughts of heart.' Church and state are divided. And among other divisions that have been of late, we are like to have a new division in point of doctrine.

There

There is a handful of ministers, who have lately put in a petition to our National Assembly, in favour of some of the pure and precious truths of the gospel, which they conceive to be injured by an act of Assembly. There is a mighty cry raised against them, both in pulpits and in common conversation, as if they were 'the troublers of Israel,' New schemers, Antinomians, and what not. Many strange errors are fathered upon them, which they never once thought of. I shall be far from bringing a railing accusation against them who study to wound their reputation, and to mar the success of their ministry; for I look on many of them as great and good men. But if they be helped to bear reproach for the name of Christ, and for the cause of his truths, with humility and lowliness of mind, the Lord in his own time will find out a way to bring them forth to the light, so as they shall behold his righteousness. And although their reputation should sink for ever in the world, under the load of calumny that is cast upon them, I hope they think it but a small sacrifice for the least truth of God, which is of more worth than heaven and earth. However, I say, this, among other things, is ground and cause of humiliation in our day, that any of the precious truths of Christ should be under a cloud, and that we should be divided in our sentiments thereon. Have we not reason to be deeply humbled for our woful defections and backslidings, which are the ground of our divisions? We are departed from the Lord, and the Lord is in a great measure departed from us. What a woful withering wind has blown upon God's vineyard in the land! We are fallen from our first love, our former zeal for God and his precious

cious truths, and the royalties of our Redeemer's crown. And is there not a lamentable decay as to the power and life of godliness, which has dwindled away into an empty form with the most? To conclude, it is not with the nobles, gentry, ministers, or people, in Scotland, as once in a day it has been; and the worst of it is, that though it be so, though grey hairs are here and there upon us, yet we do not perceive it: we make our faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return to the Lord. But I haste to a close.

Mot. 3d, Take a view of the noble patterns of humility that are set before us for our imitation. The saints militant are patterns of it. Abraham, the father of the faithful, in the forecited xviiith of Genesis, with what humility does he address himself unto God? 'Behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.' And his grand-son, Jacob, follows his footsteps herein, 'I am less,' says he, 'than the least of thy mercies.' In a word, Job, David, Isaiah, Paul, and all the cloud of witnesses, have cast us a copy of humility. Again, the saints triumphant cast us a copy of this grace: they take their crowns off their heads, and cast them down at the Mediator's feet, ascribing the glory of all unto him, saying, 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.' Again, angels are patterns of it: they do not look on it as a disparagement to be ministering spirits unto the heirs of glory. With what humility do they cover their faces with their wings in the

the presence of God, *II. vi.* ? Again, Christ is a blessed pattern of this grace: 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly:' he has 'left us an example, that we should follow his steps' therein. 'He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.' Though he was the high God, yet he 'took upon him the form of a servant.' And therefore 'let the same mind be in us, which was also in Christ Jesus,' *Phil. ii. 5.* In a word, the infinite Jehovah, the eternal God, casts us a copy of humility: for 'he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth;' and, as you see in my text, 'though he be high, yet has he respect unto the lowly.' And are not all these patterns worthy of our highest imitation? And if all this will not prevail, I offer

A fourth motive, Consider the evil and danger of the sin of pride, that lies directly opposite unto it.

1. It is loathsome in the sight of God, he cannot endure to look on it; he beholds it 'afar off.' *Prov. vi. 16.* it is set in the very front of these things that the Lord hates: 'These six things doth the Lord hate; yea, seven are an abomination unto him:' and the first of them is *a proud look.* God hates every sin, but he proclaims open war and hostility against the proud.

2. The evil of it appears, in that it is a sign of a rotten heart within: *Hab. ii. 4.* 'Behold, his soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him.' As humility and sincerity, so pride and hypocrisy go hand in hand.

3. It is the fertile womb of many other evils. It is the spring of division: *Prov. xiii. 10.* 'Only by pride cometh

‘ cometh contention.’ As I was saying just now, there are a great many divisions amongst us at this day. Church and state is divided, congregations and families are divided, ministers and people are divided : What is the matter ? Pride lies at the bottom. If our proud hearts were but so far humbled, as to confess our faults one to another, our divisions would soon come to an end. Again, pride is the mother of error and heresy ; a root of bitterness that is troubling our Israel at this day. When men, especially clergymen, who have all a tang of infallibility with them, have asserted any thing that is amiss in point of doctrine, their pride will not allow them to retract. Truth itself must rather fall a sacrifice, than their reputation sink. Pride of reason is the very soul of the Socinian, and pride of will the soul of Arminian errors, and pride of self-righteousness is the source of that legal spirit that so much prevails in our day. Again, pride is the spring and root of apostasy ; for, says Solomon, ‘ Pride goeth before destruction, and ‘ an haughty spirit before a fall.’ Peter’s pride was the immediate forerunner of his denying his Lord and Master. But again, consider, that God has a particular quarrel with the sin of pride : he has threatened to ‘ scatter the proud, in the imagination of their own ‘ hearts.’ You may read a lecture of God’s controversy with the proud, Is. ii. 11. 12. 13. &c. ‘ The ‘ lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down — The day of ‘ the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is ‘ proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted ‘ up, and he shall be brought low.’ And, vers. 17. ‘ The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the ‘ haughtiness

‘haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.’ O what ruin has the sin of pride brought along with it!

1st, It turned angels into devils, and threw them from heaven into hell; ‘being lifted up with pride,’ they ‘fell into condemnation, as the apostle insinuates. God could not endure pride to dwell so near him; and therefore he tumbled them down from heaven, and laid them under chains of eternal darkness.

2^{dly}, It was pride that has wracked all mankind, when it crept out of the higher into the lower Paradise. ‘Ye shall be as gods,’ said the serpent; and immediately the bait was caught at, though in the event it made them liker the devil than God.

3^{dly}, We might trace the story of what ruins it hath brought with it upon the ungodly world. Pharaoh refuses to bow so far to the command of God, as to let Israel go; saying, ‘Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?’ And therefore he and his host shall ‘sink like lead in the mighty waters.’ Haman’s pride brought him to an ignominious end: though he was his prince’s greatest favourite to-day, yet he was hanged to-morrow, on the gallows which he had set up for poor Mordecai. Nebuchadnezzar proudly vaunts himself of his royal palace, ‘Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?’ and immediately he is turned out from the society of men, and made to eat grass with the oxen. Herod, after his fine oration, he receives that applause from the people without any check, ‘It is the voice of a god, and not of a man;’ and immediately

‘ immediately the angel of the Lord smites him, and
 ‘ he is eaten of worms.’

4thly, As God has punished it in the wicked, so he has shewed his resentment against it in his own children. And pass who will, they shall not miss a stroke, if their hearts be lifted up within them : ‘ You only have I known of all the families of the earth ; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.’ David’s pride prompted him to number Israel, that he might make his brag that he was king over so many thousands ; and thereupon a raging pestilence, in three days time, sweeps away seventy thousand of Israel. Hezekiah’s pride made him to shew his treasure of precious things to the king of Babylon’s ambassadors ; and therefore his posterity and his treasures must be carried away to Babylon out of their native land. In a word, though you were as the signet on God’s right hand, ye shall not escape a stroke of fatherly wrath and anger, if you allow pride to lodge in your hearts. That threatening shall surely take place both among friends and enemies, Prov. xxix. 23. ‘ A man’s pride shall bring him low.’ And if it miss his person, it shall fall heavy on his family : Prov. xv. 25. ‘ The Lord will destroy the house of ‘ the proud.’

VI. The *sixth* and *last* thing I proposed was, to *offer a few advices, in order to your attaining this lowly frame and temper of soul, which the high God doth somuch regard.*

1. Go to the law as a schoolmaster ; read the ten commandments, and Christ’s spiritual commentary upon them, Matth. v. View the law of God in its
 utmost

utmost extent, and spirituality; for 'it is exceeding broad.' This would make the proudest heart to lie in the dust: Rom. vii. 9. 'I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.' The feathers of his pride and legal righteousness soon fell, when the law in its spirituality was set before his eyes.

2. Get Christ to dwell in your heart by faith: for the reigning power of this evil is never broken, till Christ come by the power of his Spirit, bringing down the towering imaginations of the heart, and erect his throne there. The more of Christ, the more humility; and the less of Christ, the more pride. When the Spirit of Christ enters into the heart, he stamps the likeness and image of Christ there. O then, if you would have this humility and lowliness of spirit, 'lift up the everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in:' he brings a glorious retinue of graces with him, whereof this is one of the first.

3. Be much in viewing the glorious perfections of the Majesty of heaven, as they are displayed in the works of creation and providence; but especially as they shine in the face of Jesus Christ, and the glorious work of redemption through him. When the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple, he cries out, 'Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.' See Job xlii. 5. 6. 'I have heard of thee,' says he, 'by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'

Be much in viewing the rock whence ye were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were digged;

ged; I mean, your original corruption and depravation; how you are conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity. And O how much of this cleaves even to believers themselves, while they are on this side of eternity! There is a 'law in the members' continually 'warring against the law of the mind.' This laid the great apostle Paul in the dust, notwithstanding of his high attainments.

5. Be much in viewing the vanity of the creature, and all things below. 'Vanity and vexation of spirit' is written in legible characters upon all things under the sun. 'The fashion of this world is passing away.' Be much in viewing the bed of the grave, where you must lie down shortly, and where rottenness and corruption shall cover you: let this make you 'say,' with Job, 'to corruption, Thou art my father;' and 'to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.' View an awful tribunal, and an endless eternity, that is to follow on the back of death, where you and I shortly shall stand pannels, and receive a sentence from the righteous Judge, which shall determine our state for ever.

6. *Lastly*, Be much in eying these patterns of lowliness and humility which I already mentioned. God, angels, and saints, have cast you a copy of it. But especially be much in viewing the humility and humiliation of the Son of God, which is proposed as the great pattern, Phil. ii. 5. 6. 7. 8. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself

- himself of no reputation, and took upon him the
- form of a servant, and was made in the likeness
- of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he
- humbled himself, and became obedient unto death,
- even the death of the cross.

The End of the FIRST VOLUME.

30 JY 64

